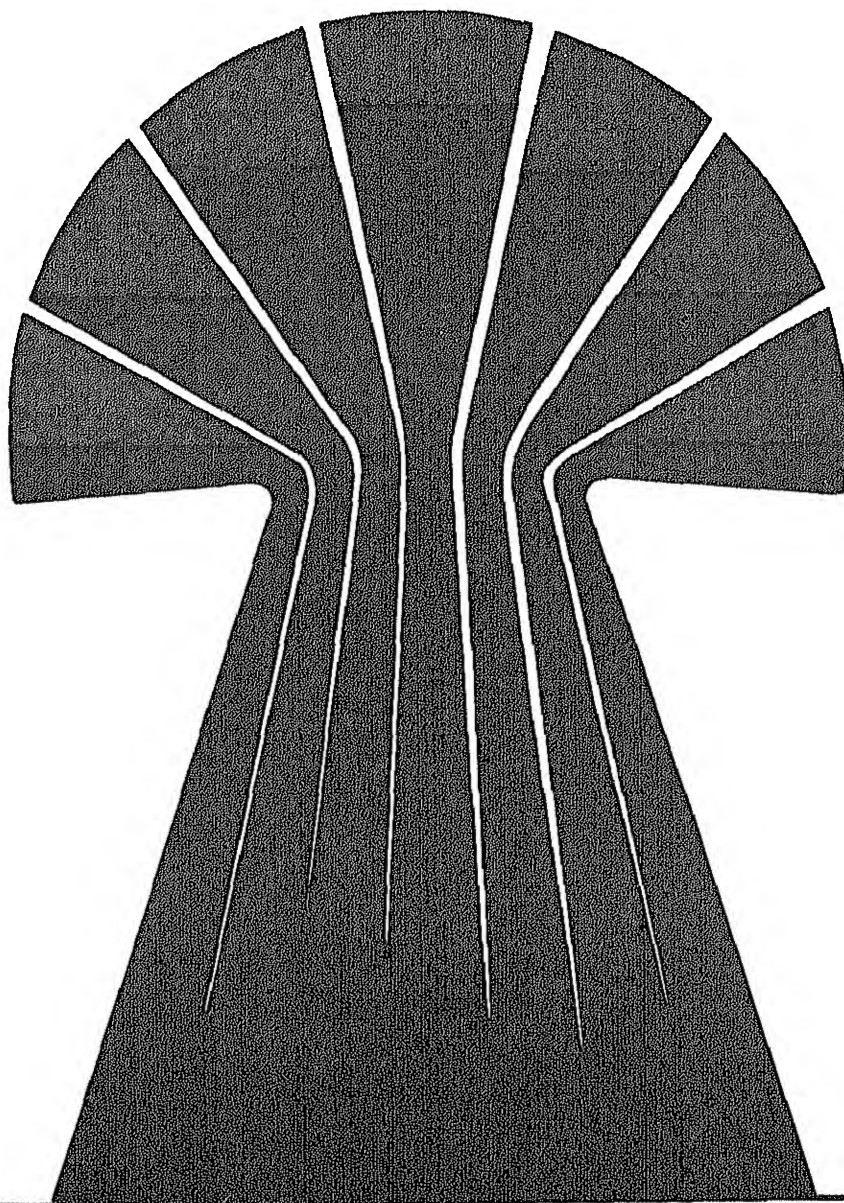


FOOD

BIBLIOGRAPHY

JANUARY 1981 - DECEMBER 1984



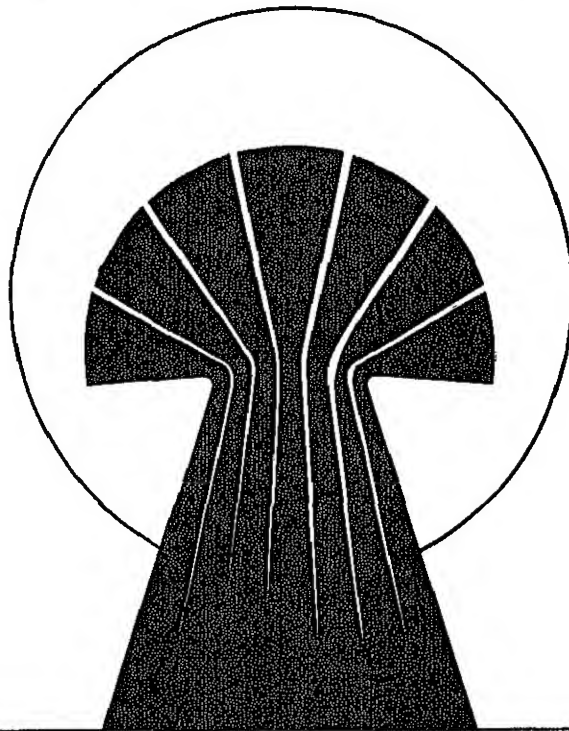
**References to Reports and Other Documents
Issued by the U.S. General Accounting Office**

GAO/RCED-85-82

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JANUARY 1981 - DECEMBER 1984**



**U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548**

APRIL 1985

GAO/RCED-85-82

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

CHARLES A. BOWSHER

COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

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FOREWORD

Food, agriculture, and nutrition are important issues in public policy decisionmaking. Decreasing federal government's regulatory role, increasing food prices, balancing interactive domestic and foreign agricultural and other economic systems--all represent important national concerns.

This bibliography includes information on U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) documents directly or indirectly related to food, agriculture and/or nutrition released between January 1981 and December 1984. A companion bibliography which includes information on documents released between January 1977 and December 1980 is available by requesting the **Food Bibliography**, CED-81-73, April 1981, Accession Number 115134.

Although the Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division (RCED) is GAO's lead division for reviews of food programs and policy, a broad interrelationship exists between the food area and other areas of interest addressed by GAO such as health, transportation, energy, defense, and international affairs. This bibliography, therefore, includes information on documents issued by other GAO divisions and offices that have linkages to food, agriculture, and nutrition issues.

We hope that this bibliography will be useful for general information and research purposes and for understanding issues in the food areas that are being addressed by GAO. Questions regarding its contents should be directed to William E. Gahr, Associate Director, RCED, Room 4073-F, GAO Building, 441 G. Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20548, (202) 275-5525. Readers interested in ordering individual documents in the food or other areas, or in requesting bibliographic searches on a specific topic, should call GAO Document Handling and Informations Services (202) 275-6241. The card included in this book also may be used to order documents.

J. Dexter Peach
Director
Resources, Community, and Economic
Development Division

INTRODUCTION

This **Food Bibliography** contains citations and abstracts of food-related documents released by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) from January 1981 through December 1984. Included are references to audit reports, staff studies, speeches, testimonies, Comptroller General decisions, and other GAO documents. This bibliography can be used for a variety of purposes, including in-depth research into a specific topic, searching for a particular document, maintaining current awareness, and general browsing.

HOW TO USE THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography is organized in two sections: a CITATION SECTION (white pages) and an INDEX SECTION (yellow pages).

The CITATION SECTION consists of brief descriptions of the documents and often includes an informative abstract. Some or all of the following information is contained in each citation, as appropriate:

- o **Title/Subtitle**
- o **Type, date, and pagination of the document**
- o **Author/Witness**
- o **GAO Issue Areas**
- o **Agencies/Organizations concerned**
- o **Congressional Committees and/or Members to whom the document is specifically relevant**
- o **Law and/or related statutory/regulatory authorities upon which the document is based**
- o **GAO Contact**

The INDEX SECTION is the key for locating references to food-related documents cited in this bibliography. The section is comprised of three separate indexes that classify information according to:

Subject

Agency or organization

(Includes both Federal agencies and nongovernmental corporate bodies)

Congressional affiliation

(Includes entries under relevant congressional committees and individual Representatives and Senators)

Reference from the index entries to the corresponding citations is provided by a unique six-digit accession number assigned to each citation. The accession number should also be used to request copies of the document described in the citation section.

A sample entry is shown opposite page one of the Citation Section and at the beginning of each index.

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SAMPLE CITATION

Accession Number — **123088**

Title/Subtitle — **AFDC Recipients Who Are Terminated for Not Submitting a Monthly Eligibility Report May Be Receiving Undetected Overpayments.** (Invented Titles Are Bracketed)

Document/Report Number — **HRD-83-70.** July 20, 1983. 6 pp. — **Pagination**

Type of Document — **Report to John A. Svahn, Commissioner of Social Security, Social Security Administration; by Daniel W. Blades, Group Director, GAO Human Resources Division.** — **Document Date**

GAO Issue Area — **Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Efficient Administration and Quality of Service of Needs-Based Cash Assistance Programs (1332).** (Code Numbers in Parentheses)

Budget Function — **Contact: Human Resources Division.** — **GAO Contact**

(Code Numbers in Parentheses) — **Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).**

Congressional Relevance — **Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Social Security Administration.** — **Agency/Organization Concerned**

Legislative Authority — **Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means; Senate Committee on Finance.**

Abstract — **Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35).**

Abstract — **Abstract: GAO reviewed compliance with the intent and specific provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 as it applies to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. Findings/Conclusions: Title XXIII of the act contains provisions to retarget scarce financial resources by limiting AFDC eligibility and benefits to the truly needy, achieve cost savings through more efficient program administration, and require retrospective budgeting and monthly reporting under the AFDC program. GAO noted that 43 of the 50 States either already have or are in the process of implementing the AFDC monthly reporting requirement combined with a 2-month retrospective budgeting process. While 2 months allows the administering agency time to adjust benefits, the reporting sequence does not provide timely information on basic program eligibility. GAO found that States which utilize 2-month retrospective budgeting systems in conjunction with monthly reporting are susceptible to making undetected overpayments when recipients do not report changes affecting their eligibility and are discontinued from the rolls. Further, GAO found that there is no incentive for an ineligible recipient to submit a monthly report and, by not doing so, there is an opportunity to receive an unwarranted benefit. Recommendation To Agencies: The Commissioner of Social Security should assess the magnitude of AFDC overpayments going undetected when recipients are terminated for monthly reporting noncompliance and, if warranted by the results of the assessment, develop a cost effective solution to avoid or minimize the overpayments.** — **Findings/Conclusions**

Recommendations to Agencies — **Recommendation To Agencies: The Commissioner of Social Security should assess the magnitude of AFDC overpayments going undetected when recipients are terminated for monthly reporting noncompliance and, if warranted by the results of the assessment, develop a cost effective solution to avoid or minimize the overpayments.**

CITATION SECTION

114084

[Increased Management Action Needed To Help TDP Meet Its Objectives]. ID-81-20, B-200438 January 6, 1981. 2 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.) plus 1 enclosure (16 pp.).
Report to David A. Raymond, Acting Director, International Development Cooperation Agency; Trade and Development Program; by J. Kenneth Fasick, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: U.S. Trade as a Development Mechanism (0634)

Contact: International Division

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: International Development Cooperation Agency; Trade and Development Program; Agency for International Development; Agency for International Development: Bureau for Program and Management Services

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *House* Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs; *House* Committee on Ways and Means; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations, *Senate* Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Mutual Security Act, 1954.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA) Trade and Development Program (TDP) to assess TDP effectiveness in achieving its dual objectives to foster development overseas and to promote U.S. exports of technology and services for development projects. *Findings/Conclusions:* GAO found that: (1) with available data it is difficult to demonstrate the extent to which TDP has contributed to development in developing countries or to increased U.S. exports; (2) more systematic data collection and evaluation procedures are required; (3) coordination between TDP and other trade and development agencies requires strengthening; and (4) TDP personnel problems could affect program effectiveness. If TDP is to achieve its objectives, increased management attention should be focused on solving these problems. Future funding may be made contingent upon whether TDP proves that it is meeting its objectives and is operating effectively. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Director of TDP should (1) develop an effective system to routinely collect, organize, and analyze data to assess TDP activity results; (2) establish, as a part of the system above and with the assistance of the AID Bureau of Program Management and Services, an efficient and comprehensive filing/documentation system that meets all Federal requirements, so TDP officials can better monitor program activities; (3) establish closer working relationships with other U.S. development and trade agencies to better promote U.S. trade and to meet the needs of all developing countries; and (4) fill *attache* positions as quickly as possible and institute procedures to insure that personnel selected for professional positions will have adequate backgrounds in both trade and development.

114223

Summary of GAO Reports Issued Since 1977 Pertaining to Farm Bill Legislation. CED-81-43; B-201660. January 21, 1981. 166 pp.
Report to Rep. Clement J. Zablocki, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Rep. E. (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Charles H. Percy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food; Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1751).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); Health (550.0).

Food Bibliography

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture, *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations, *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* Clement J. Zablocki, *Rep.* E. (Kika) De La Garza; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms; *Sen.* Charles H. Percy

Authority: Food and Agriculture Act of 1977.

Abstract: A compilation is presented of reports issued since 1977 on topics which are addressed by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 and related subjects. The summary was prepared to assist the members of the agriculture committees in their deliberations on renewal, modification, and extension of the Farm Bill.

114229

[Proposed Revisions of Regulations Regarding Sioux Benefits]. B-199418. January 30, 1981. 9 pp.

Decision re: Department of the Interior; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General)

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Authority: Sioux Indian Allotment Act (25 Stat. 888). Indian Reorganization Act (25 U.S.C. 474, 48 Stat. 987). 9 Comp. Gen. 271, 9 Comp. Gen. 371. 9 Comp. Gen. 373. 11 Comp. Gen. 469. 21 Comp. Dec. 806. A-19504 (1929) A-61511 (1935). A-96643 (1938). 29 Stat. 321. 29 Stat. 334. 45 Stat. 684.

Abstract: The Department of the Interior proposes to revise the policies and regulations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs which govern the payment of certain benefits to Sioux Indians as a result of a suit against the Department which challenged the constitutionality of the present regulations. The Department asked GAO to modify or withdraw a number of its decisions which are inconsistent with the proposed regulations. Inconsistencies arise in four areas. head of family status; double benefits prohibition; vesting rights; and timing of eligibility determinations. The benefits in question are articles of farming equipment and stock or the computed cash value of such articles. Only Sioux Indians who are single persons over the age of 18 or heads of families are eligible. The applicant must have received an allotment of land to be eligible under two of the statutes. These regulations did not define the term head of a family. The Department has concluded that these regulations are unconstitutional in that they discriminate against women on the basis of sex. GAO concurred with the Department that changes in the regulations were necessary so that either a husband or wife could qualify as head of the family and overruled former decisions to the contrary. The Department held that the prohibition against the double benefits provision of the statutes which merged the rights of Sioux women with that of their husbands by virtue of their marital status discriminated against women. GAO concurred with that determination and overruled a prior decision insofar as it held that a formerly married Sioux woman's entitlement to Sioux benefits in her own right were exhausted when her then-husband received Sioux benefits as head of the family. The Department proposed regulations that would require all applications for benefits to be made and approved during the lifetime of the applicant. It requested GAO to withdraw or modify decisions to the contrary. GAO will defer to the Department's preferred interpretation of the statutory language and overruled GAO decisions concerning the vesting of Sioux benefits. The Department revised its general rule of determining eligibility as of the application date and requested GAO to withdraw or modify two decisions which were in conflict with this determination. The decisions were overruled to the extent that they conflicted with the proposed rule governing redetermination of eligibility.

114231

[*Protest of Department of Agriculture Contract Award*]. B-200608. January 30, 1981. 5 pp.
Decision re: California State University: University Foundation, Chico, CA; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General)

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: California State University: University Foundation, Chico, CA; Department of Agriculture; Utah State University.

Authority: 50 Comp. Gen. 246. 51 Comp. Gen. 153. 51 Comp. Gen. 161. 52 Comp. Gen. 358. 54 Comp. Gen. 896. 55 Comp. Gen. 1111. 55 Comp. Gen. 1118. 56 Comp. Gen. 976. 56 Comp. Gen. 977 B-173137(1) (1971). B-182104 (1974). B-184658 (1976). B-192008 (1979) B-196365 (1980). B-199171 (1980).

Abstract: A firm protested the award of a contract to Utah State University under a request for proposals (RFP) issued by the Department of Agriculture. The RFP solicited proposals for the training of Government employees in meat grading, inspection, and acceptance procedures. In its protest, the firm contended that the agency deviated from the evaluation criteria of the RFP, which placed primary emphasis on technical factors, by making an award at a lower cost. The record showed that, although the protester received the highest technical score, award was made to the lower-scored, lower-priced offeror. The only evidence furnished by the contracting agency to support the contracting officer's decision was the composite score sheet for all the evaluation board members, which contained no narrative commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. GAO held that the instant record was insufficient to support the contracting officer's selection. GAO could not determine that the award was rationally founded without any factual explanation as to why the contracting officer concluded that the differences between the two technical proposals was in effect insubstantial. Accordingly, the protest was sustained. Additionally, since the Department of Agriculture has stated that it terminated its contract with the awardee for default and has resolicited its requirements, and since the protester has stated that it will accept an award under the original RFP, GAO recommends that the Department of Agriculture cancel the new RFP and award the terminated contract to the protester.

114284

[*Protest of Agency Determination To Set Aside Procurement Under Section 8(a)*]. B-201852. February 9, 1981. 2 pp.

Decision re: Space Services International Corp.; by Milton J. Socolar, General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Space Services International Corp.; Department of the Army: Fort Jackson, SC.

Authority: Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(c)). B-199854 (1980).

Abstract: A firm protested the setting aside of a food services contract under section 8(a) of the Small Business Act. The firm contended that, since the contract is currently being performed by a non-8(a) concern and traditionally has been solicited as a small business set-aside, the agency should continue to procure these services under a small business set-aside. A contracting officer is authorized to let a contract to the Small Business Administration (SBA) upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon by the procuring agency and SBA. GAO does not review agency determinations to set aside procurements under section 8(a) unless there is a showing of bad faith or fraud on the part of Government officials. No such showing was made here. Accordingly, the protest was dismissed.

114317

[*Summary of Major Deficiencies in the Farmers Home*

Administration's Business and Industrial Loan Program]. CED-81-56; B-201890. January 30, 1981. Released February 5, 1981. 3 pp. plus 1 enclosure (13 pp.).

Report to Sen. Roger W. Jepsen; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General

Issue Area: Domestic Housing and Community Development: Effectiveness of the Nation's Comprehensive Rural Development Policy (2120).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development: Area and Regional Development (452.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture: Office of the Inspector General.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Roger W. Jepsen.

Authority: Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 1932).

Abstract: GAO was asked to summarize the major deficiencies in the Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) Business and Industrial Loan Program. GAO was also asked to base the summary on audits by GAO and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and internal FmHA studies. In 1977, GAO reported on loan evaluation and servicing deficiencies in the FmHA program. *Findings/Conclusions:* The review of OIG audits and FmHA internal assessments showed that many of the deficiencies identified in the 1977 report still exist. GAO believes that the continuing deficiencies in the FmHA program are the result of an imbalance between FmHA staffing levels and program activities and the failure of FmHA staff to follow or enforce program requirements. GAO believes that to correct the deficiencies: (1) a better balance will be needed between FmHA staffing and program activities; (2) loan-approving officials should be required to certify loan approval to some outside entity, such as OIG, for loans previously rejected at a lower review level; (3) FmHA needs to continue strengthening its monitoring capabilities, (4) periodic audits and congressional oversight should be carried out as needed to surface problems and ensure their correction; and (5) remedial training and, where appropriate, disciplinary action must be provided when program requirements are not followed. GAO found that FmHA was in the process of tightening program requirements for loans involving refinancing and that these new requirements should minimize differences in interpretations of FmHA requirements and result in approving sounder loans. GAO believes that if the new FmHA requirements do not achieve the desired results, FmHA should reconsider subjecting such loans to national office approval as previously suggested.

114322

How the Farm Credit Administration Can Improve Its Use of Auditing. GGD-81-22; B-197162. January 28, 1981. 26 pp.

Report to Donald E. Wilkinson, Governor, Farm Credit Administration; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Internal Auditing Systems. Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0251).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems: Internal Audit (998.3).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration; Federal Farm Credit Board; Farm Credit Administration: Office of Examination.

Authority: Farm Credit Act of 1971 (P.L. 92-181; 85 Stat. 583). FCA Reg. 8430.

Abstract: The Farm Credit Administration (FCA) is given the authority to supervise and coordinate the activities of the cooperative Farm Credit System. An evaluation was performed of the use of auditing by FCA and its support of the use of auditing within the System. *Findings/Conclusions:* Although FCA has recognized the

need for an independent internal review of its management activities, it has not done enough to encourage the development of internal audit activities throughout the System. Specifically, FCA has not: (1) provided leadership for the development of System-wide internal auditing standards; (2) furnished active, consistent support to the System's Internal Auditors Conference; and (3) consistently reported on the progress and problems of internal auditing activities in its reviews of bank operations. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Governor of FCA should augment his financial examination efforts by using external auditors to ensure that financial examination procedures are in conformance with generally accepted auditing standards. The Federal Farm Credit Board should direct the Governor of FCA to monitor the implementation of the revised internal control policy to insure that independent bank internal audit functions are maintained. The Federal Farm Credit Board should direct the Governor of FCA to require that the Office of Examination reports to a bank's Board of Directors comment on the quality of the internal auditing system. The Federal Farm Credit Board should direct the Governor of FCA to furnish active, consistent support for the FCS Internal Auditors' Conference. The Federal Farm Credit Board should direct the Governor of FCA to provide leadership to the FCS to develop a set of professional internal auditing standards which will provide a basis for a more thorough evaluation of internal audits by both FCA and bank management as well as encouraging professionalism within bank internal audit units.

114339

[*Ways To Reduce Government Spending*]. January 29, 1981. 9 pp. plus 3 attachments (11 pp.).

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Appropriations; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the Comptroller General.

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of Agriculture; Social Security Administration; Bureau of Land Management.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Authority: S. 3026 (96th Cong.). S. 3160 (96th Cong.). S. 3246 (96th Cong.). S. 42 (96th Cong.). H. 8063 (96th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO has made both programmatic and administrative recommendations for budget savings over the past several years. There is fraud, abuse, and waste in Government. There are many things the Government could do to improve its internal controls over agency programs, collect debts owed to the Government, and take action on previous audit findings that could result in large savings to the Government. GAO has identified: (1) a case involving an alleged embezzlement of almost \$2 million in medical funds from a health care program; (2) excesses in the food stamp program; (3) internal control weaknesses in a computer system which resulted in over \$25 million erroneous benefit payments; and (4) illegal mining of coal on Federal lands. GAO has issued numerous reports recommending changes in income security programs. Some of the recommendations include: (1) termination of Social Security benefits for postsecondary students; (2) elimination of the minimum Social Security benefit provision for new beneficiaries; (3) a requirement of States to deposit Social Security taxes semi-monthly or biweekly; and (4) calculating Social Security benefits to the nearest penny. Agencies often have weak internal control systems that make it easier for fraud, waste, and abuse to occur. GAO has supported legislation which would require greater accountability by heads of agencies for the effectiveness of their organizations' internal controls. Agencies have not aggressively tried to collect amounts owed the Government after they have been identified. Present collection methods are expensive, slow, and relatively ineffective when compared to commercial practices. The collection of debts has been hampered by: (1) a lack of prompt and aggressive collection; (2) low or no interest being imposed on delinquent

accounts; and (3) inaccuracies in accounting for and reporting accounts receivable, including inadequate allowances for bad debts. Agencies also fail to act on their own auditors' findings. About 80 percent of such cases involve potential recoveries from grantees and contractors, including what they either spent for purposes not authorized by Federal laws and regulations or could not support as charged to the Government.

114345

Federal Water Resources Agencies Should Assess Less Costly Ways To Comply With Regulations. CED-81-36; B-197329. February 17, 1981. 51 pp. plus 9 appendices (33 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Problems Impacting on the Timely, Efficient, and Economical Construction and Maintenance of Water Resources Projects (2509).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Training and Employment (504.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Department of Labor; Department of the Interior; Department of Agriculture; Water Resources Council; Water and Power Resources Service.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.). Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Executive Order 11246.

Abstract: The rapid growth of Government regulations, coupled with recent economic difficulties facing the Nation, has heightened public concern over regulatory costs and burdens. The President has ordered agencies which write regulations to evaluate their economic impact. **Findings/Conclusions:** Many social and environmental regulations have a major impact on the costs, competition, and the administration of Federal water resources projects. Agencies and contractors have major compliance responsibilities during construction, and both are concerned with the cost and burden of regulations, especially the cumulative impact. GAO interviewed construction officials about their concerns in several regulatory areas and studied compliance practices in the areas of fish and wildlife conservation, cultural properties protection, and employment of women in construction. Construction officials were concerned about the cumulative cost and burden of regulations, the lack of consideration of economic impacts, and coordination difficulties. The case studies showed that, when agencies planned projects, they did not develop enough information on costs, burdens, and benefits to evaluate alternatives. Contractors had insufficient knowledge and advice in the area of regulation compliance. Time factors prevented agencies from developing more information on alternatives. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Army should direct the Chief of Engineers, and the Secretary of the Interior should direct the Commissioner of the Water and Power Resources Service, to evaluate alternative methods of compliance with social and environmental regulations in construction and initiate action for doing so which satisfies the needs listed above. The Director of the Water Resources Council should develop methods and techniques which construction agencies can use in evaluating alternative means of compliance with social and environmental regulations and consider sharing them with other Federal, State, or local agencies that might benefit from such information.

114367

[*Entitlement to Station Allowances at With-Dependent Rate*]. B-196603. February 18, 1981. 2 pp.

Decision re: Station Allowances; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of Defense.

Authority: 1 J.T.R. para. M4300-1

Abstract: The Department of Defense asked GAO to reconsider a decision in which a member of the uniformed services, a resident of Hawaii who entered on active duty there and was assigned to duty on the Island of Oahu, but whose dependent wife remained on the Island of Maui, was denied station allowances at the with-dependent rate. This conclusion was based on the ground that the dependent's presence in the vicinity of the duty station was not related to the member's assignment. Reliance on that rule was not correct since the member, who was stationed in Hawaii, was called to extended active duty when a resident of Hawaii. In such circumstances, the cost-of-living allowance at the with-dependent rate may be paid if the member's dependents live in the vicinity of the duty station. The original decision in this case was overruled.

114416

Federal-Interstate Compact Commissions: Useful Mechanisms for Planning and Managing River Basin Operations. CED-81-34, B-201904. February 20, 1981. 30 pp. plus 4 appendices (11 pp.). Report to Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effectiveness of Arrangements for Addressing National, Regional, and State Water Resources Problems (2512).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Delaware River Basin Commission, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: Congress

Authority: Clean Water Act of 1977. Water Resources Planning Act. P.L. 87-328

Abstract: A review was undertaken of the two existing Federal-interstate compact commissions, the Delaware and Susquehanna River Basins Commissions, to evaluate their effectiveness in dealing with water problems. Federal-interstate compacts are formal agreements between two or more States and the United States to promote effective basinwide water resources management. They reflect a significant departure from traditional compacts in that (1) the United States is a signatory party with the States, and (2) extremely broad powers are granted to the compact commissions. The commissions are responsible for multipurpose planning, management, and development of the river basins' resources. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, although the commissions are currently encountering problems, including internal disagreements over their roles and funding, they contribute to consistency in water resources management throughout their respective basins and provide each basin State with a voice on interstate matters. The commissions can act in some cases when a member party cannot. The commissions are attempting to solve complex, controversial issues such as water allocation and adequate water supplies. Such issues affect a vital need of member parties. While no easy solutions exist to these problems, the commissions are working toward meeting the basins' water needs. Their progress has been slow, but GAO believes that the States rate high marks for initiating the compact arrangement and committing themselves to working through a regional river basin commission. Additionally, GAO believes that the future effectiveness of the intergovernmental commissions depends on all parties' commitment to support and fully participate in it even at the cost of occasionally sacrificing their individual prerogatives.

114477

[Recommendations of the Commission on Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Salaries]. February 18, 1981. 8 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Testimony before the Quadrennial Pay Commission Task Force, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General

Contact: Office of the Comptroller General

Organization Concerned: Commission on Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Salaries

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service

Authority: Executive Salary Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act. Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.

Abstract: One of the more serious problems facing Government today is the inadequate salary levels for top Federal officials and the depressing effect this has on the pay rates for the entire Federal management structure. Top Federal officials, including members of Congress, have been making financial sacrifices for many years. The Commission on Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Salaries has made salary recommendations to improve the pay situation including: (1) permitting an automatic pay adjustment; (2) enacting legislation to permit reimbursement for relocation costs; (3) granting a special expense allowance to members of Congress to cover the actual costs related both to the need to maintain dual residences and to cover the expenses of representing their constituents; (4) establishing a commission to resolve the problems inherent in the complex total compensation system for Federal employees; and (5) providing for a biennial review of executive, legislative, and judicial salaries. Pay raises provided to members of Congress, Federal judges, and top Federal executives have routinely been reduced or denied. These officials have suffered large losses in purchasing power, which has resulted in severe retention problems. Little incentive exists for Federal executives to seek positions of greater authority and responsibility. Low salaries cause recruitment problems. Many Federal executives have chosen to retire rather than to continue working at frozen pay levels. This incentive to retire is intensified by the regular cost-of-living adjustments that retirees receive. The compensation system of the newly created Senior Executive Service (SES) is severely limited. Virtually all SES members are paid the same rate despite major differences in their responsibilities. SES bonuses have been reduced. A major factor causing pay compression is the informal link between congressional, executive, and judicial salaries. Executive and judicial pay is adversely affected when Congress has been unwilling to increase its own pay. GAO believes that regular adjustments to pay are more acceptable to the public than large jumps every 4 years and, therefore, have recommended that Congress allow annual adjustments to take effect as the law provides.

114499

American Employment Abroad Discouraged by U.S. Income Tax Laws. ID-81-29; B-201988. February 27, 1981. 29 pp. plus 3 appendices (10 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: U.S. Advantage in Trade and Technology (0608); Tax Policy: Impact of Tax Provisions on Economic Stabilization and Growth (1503).

Contact: International Division

Budget Function: General Government: Central Fiscal Operations (803.0); General Government: Tax Administration (803.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: Congress

Authority: Foreign Earned Income Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-615). Tax Reform Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-455).

Abstract: The deficit in the U.S. balance of trade has been the focus

of major initiatives to improve Government export promotion programs and to identify and correct Government disincentives to exports. To adequately promote and service U.S. products and operations in foreign countries, U.S. companies employ a large force of U.S. citizens abroad. There is widespread concern that tax provisions are proving a disincentive to the employment of U.S. citizens abroad and, therefore, are adversely affecting exports. **Findings/Conclusions:** A GAO survey of a group of major U.S. companies having substantial operations abroad revealed that U.S. taxes were an important factor in reducing the number of Americans employed overseas. The tax laws do not fully relieve the companies' employees from taxes on income reflecting the excessive costs of living and working abroad. Companies generally reimburse overseas employees for their additional tax burden, making Americans more costly than citizens of competing countries, who are generally not taxed by their home countries. The complexity of the new tax laws makes compliance difficult and expensive. The congressional intent in passing the Foreign Earned Income Act was to create greater equity between people working abroad and at home and to provide benefits for the U.S. economy by encouraging Americans to work in hardship areas. In practice, the law falls far short of its goal of providing equity and runs counter to the general goal of simplifying U.S. tax returns. The deductions for cost of living, housing, schooling expenses, and home leave transportation do not appear to reduce income earned abroad by the actual costs of these items. The Act fails to consider other costs, the most significant of which is the tax on the tax reimbursement designed to compensate employees for the excess taxes, both U.S. and foreign, that are incurred as a result of working overseas. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should consider placing Americans working abroad on an income tax basis comparable with that of citizens of competitor countries who generally are not taxed on their foreign earned income, because (1) present U.S. tax provisions are widely regarded as discouraging employment of U.S. citizens abroad; (2) present tax provisions have reportedly made Americans relatively more expensive than competing third-country nationals, thereby reducing their share of employment abroad by major U.S. companies; and (3) Americans retained abroad by major companies are generally reimbursed for their higher taxes, adding to the companies' operating costs and making them less competitive.

114519

[*Structure of American Agriculture*]. March 2, 1981. 8 pp. plus 2 attachments (2 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Forests, Family Farms and Energy Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Forests, Family Farms and Energy Subcommittee.

Abstract: Significant changes have occurred in American agriculture during the last 3 decades. The basic trend has been one of an increasing concentration of farms as well as supporting facilities. There has also been a drastic reduction in the number of farms, people living on farms, and a decline in rural vitality. It is estimated that less than one-half of all farmland is owned by the farm operator and that 75 percent of those who own farmland are not actual farm operators. These changes take on greater importance when viewed in the context of agriculture's larger role in U.S. and world economies. The United States depends on the agricultural community for food production and for farm and off-farm employment. It exports the produce from one out of every three harvested acres, making it a contributor to balancing the trade deficit. Without adequate safeguards, the U.S. economy can be significantly affected by the uncertainty of other nations' agricultural demands. Three basic

pressures have contributed to the concentration and specialization in the farm sector and the growth of new farm characteristics including: (1) the cost-price squeeze; (2) the technology treadmill; and (3) Government programs. Since World War II, general inflation and rising costs of farm inputs have continually narrowed profit margins per unit of output. To maintain income, the surviving farmer had to concentrate his efforts on a smaller scale. In the 1970's, even the most aggressive farmers were feeling economic pressures. Because productivity per acre leveled off, future production increases to farm expansion have been limited. Farmers made use of technological breakthroughs in an attempt to maintain income. Costly equipment led to specialization by the farmers who could not afford to buy all of the equipment necessary for a general farm operation. Government programs, policies, and regulations have had structural implications which have not always been evident. Government programs have been keyed to production. Therefore, most of the benefits have been derived by a small number of large farms which produce most of the commodities. Some of these issues are considered in setting policy today. Economics, social soundness, environment, and politics should have overlapping roles in the process of determining farm policy.

114588

Federal Charges for Irrigation Projects Reviewed Do Not Cover Costs. PAD-81-07; B-200981. March 3, 1981. 45 pp. plus 2 appendices (108 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effective Water Conservation and Reuse Programs (2504); Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: Other Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (4051).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Water and Power Resources Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce; House Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Reclamation Act. Water Resources Development Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-251). Desert Land Act. Carey Act (Irrigation). Fact Finders Act (Reclamation Projects) (43 Stat. 703). Reclamation Extension Act. Reclamation Project Act of 1939. Omnibus Adjustment Act (Irrigation Projects) (44 Stat. 636). H.R. 4127 (96th Cong.). H.R. 4135 (96th Cong.). S. 1599 (96th Cong.). *Gibbons v. Ogden*, 22 U.S. 1 (1824).

Abstract: The Water and Power Resources Service (WPRS) is responsible for most Federal irrigation projects and charges beneficiaries for the use of water. GAO reviewed several WPRS projects under construction to determine: (1) what charges will be made for the water; (2) to what extent the charges will cover the costs to the Federal Government for providing the water; and (3) whether farmers could pay more for the water without impairing their operations or seriously damaging their profits. **Findings/Conclusions:** Legislation originally stipulated that the charges for Federal water should return all the costs of building the irrigation projects; however, subsequent laws have not required certain beneficiaries to repay their share in full. WPRS fixes a price for its irrigation water according to the farmer's ability to pay for the water, which is the amount left over from an average farmer's gross income after deducting all production costs. This amount is much less than the Federal Government's cost of producing the water. A GAO economic analysis indicated that charging full cost for the water at a 7.5 percent interest level would be too expensive for farmers to afford Federal water. GAO found that charging a full-cost price without

the interest charge, called the interest-subsidy price, would lower the cost of irrigated agriculture and increase yield enough so that farmers could probably increase their net income by buying Federal water. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Interior should direct the Commissioner of WPRS to develop and include the following economic analyses in their documents prepared as support for Congress during the authorization and appropriation process (1) estimates of the Federal Government's full cost of producing irrigation water, including an interest rate that reflected the then-current cost of money borrowed by the Federal Government. To place this cost in perspective, it should be presented as an annual figure on an acre-foot and irrigated acre basis; (2) estimates of only the yield increases expected for the acres that will receive Federal water. This will allow Congress and other decisionmakers to compare the gains in net income from the WPRS farm budget approach to the gains directly attributable to the application of more irrigation water; and (3) estimates of the change in net income on the acres to receive Federal water at full cost. This comparison of costs and gross income changes because of irrigation will show policy makers the direct economic value of producing more irrigation water.

114634

[Analysis of Department of Agriculture Report on Fraud and Abuse in Child Nutrition Programs]. CED-81-81; B-202394. March 9, 1981. Released March 13, 1981. 19 pp.

Report to Rep. Carl D. Perkins, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food. Improving Integrity and Effectiveness in Child Nutrition Programs (1723).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Office of the Inspector General; Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Education and Labor, Rep. Carl D. Perkins.

Abstract: GAO was asked to analyze a recent joint report issued by the Department of Agriculture's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Food and Nutrition Service on fraud and abuse in child nutrition programs. Specifically, GAO reviewed the school lunch program. The purpose of the review was to verify some of the OIG findings and dollar projections since the Food and Nutrition Service disputed their validity. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the great variability in the results of school feeding programs at different locations and times makes projections of the dollar impact of deficiency findings very difficult. GAO believes that the dollar impact amounts discussed in the joint report should be used with caution. Nevertheless, the OIG review has highlighted very serious and extensive problems about the integrity of school feeding programs. Although GAO does not agree with OIG in every instance, GAO believes that these problems represent program abuse with significant dollar impacts, particularly when viewed from a total school-year basis and not just the 1-month basis used in the report.

114650

[GAO Reviews of the Food Stamp Program]. March 19, 1981. 6 pp. Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture;

Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: The President has proposed eliminating the duplication between food stamp and school lunch subsidies. GAO agrees that substantial savings might be possible by eliminating this duplication. Further overlaps and potential savings are available regarding the summer food service, child care feeding, free special milk, and breakfast programs. A 1978 GAO report recommended that the Department of Agriculture study the administrative feasibility of considering child-feeding benefits when determining food stamp eligibility and benefits. Another area of potential savings discussed in that report was the use of individualized food stamp allotments. Because the uniform allotment amounts are based on the needs of an average family, the combination of free food stamps and a reasonable investment of household funds could enable some recipients to receive benefits above their food plan costs and others not enough. GAO recognized that higher administrative costs might be involved and recommended that demonstration projects be established to evaluate the increased administrative cost and error, if any, that would result. The President has proposed calculating eligibility on the basis of household income in the prior period. This retrospective accounting uses actual rather than estimated income information for making benefit determinations; however, it could result in a household receiving benefits after it no longer needs them. In 1977, GAO estimated that the Government was losing over half a billion dollars annually because of errors, misrepresentations, and suspected fraud by recipients and local food stamp offices. Progress is being made in improving controls over domestic food assistance programs. Those responsible for administering the work requirements of the Food Stamp Program seemed to regard them as administrative paperwork rather than as a tool for reducing the Program's size. GAO is currently completing an assessment of the first year's operation of the demonstration project on workfare and will recommend changes to make operation of the concept more effective.

114721

U.S. Assistance to Egyptian Agriculture: Slow Progress After 5 Years. ID-81-19, B-202371. March 16, 1981. 53 pp. plus 8 appendices (50 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Impact of Economic Assistance (0603), Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Promote International Food and Agriculture Development Assistance (1730).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs. Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Arab Republic of Egypt; Agency for International Development; Department of State; Department of the Treasury; Consortium for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. International Security Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-384). International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1975.

Abstract: Agriculture has traditionally been a mainstay of the Egyptian economy. In 1975, the Agency for International Development (AID) undertook a high-level development effort aimed at helping the government of Egypt increase agricultural production. The high level of U.S. assistance to Egypt is based on the belief that President Sadat's peace initiatives are crucial and that his effort will be supported and enhanced by a strong and growing economy that is able to meet the Egyptian people's basic needs and expectations for a better life. To assess the progress of the Egyptian agricultural assistance program and identify how program impact could be improved, GAO undertook a review of the assistance that the United

States has provided to Egyptian agriculture since 1975. *Findings/Conclusions:* Although AID has committed more than \$357 million to projects aimed at increasing food and agricultural production in Egypt, only \$61.8 million of these funds has been spent, and the impact of the projects on Egyptian agriculture has been negligible. Problems in project implementation which have caused slow progress include: contracting delays; insufficient Egyptian support; inadequate AID monitoring; and the lack of staff and expertise of some U.S. contractors, including universities. Even with speedy project implementation, the program's impact will be limited unless policy changes, which provide an environment for agricultural development, are undertaken and unless more attention is given to developing an extension service capable of delivering the technology now being developed. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Administrator of AID should require that the developmental strategy for future U.S. agricultural assistance to Egypt be revamped to include a concentrated, organized effort to develop a method for effectively transferring technology to the Egyptian farmer. The Administrator of AID should initiate actions to reassess the optimal degree of U.S. university involvement in U.S. agricultural development programs in Egypt. In making this assessment, consideration should be given to the problems affecting current university performance and the universities' willingness and ability to alleviate those problems in assisting in future projects. GAO further recommends that AID, in establishing future levels of project assistance to the agricultural sector, thoroughly consider whether the Egyptian ministries responsible for project implementation have the ability to effectively absorb the additional assistance programmed. The Administrator of AID should take action to cause programmers of future development projects, particularly agricultural projects in Egypt, to fully use and consider AID's extensive experience and all available information in designing those projects. This effort should be directed to developing ways to minimize the costs of potential implementation problems. The Administrator of AID should work with the Egyptian government to establish the necessary authorities and procedures to insure the timely processing of AID-financed commodities through Egyptian customs. The Administrator of AID should (1) clearly define AID project officers' monitoring responsibilities, including relations with U.S. contractors and Egyptian officials and periodic visits to project sites; (2) clearly assign responsibility for coordinating with other donors on specific projects; (3) assist Egyptian ministries in understanding and applying established U.S. procedures and regulations which affect project implementation. The Administrator of AID should require that a formal understanding be reached and incorporated into future Commodity Import Program agreements, thereby outlining Egyptian Government plans to address agricultural and other economic policy concerns and assess the effects of U.S.-financed imports on local producers and on Egyptian development.

114747

[*Reviews of Department of Agriculture Activities*]. March 18, 1981. 13 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Rural Electrification Administration; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO provided information on the results of some of its reviews concerning Department of Agriculture activities and related presidential budget proposals including: the Dairy Price-Support Program, the subject of parity as a tool for formulating and evaluating agricultural policy, the suspension of grain sales to Russia, the

Farmer-Owned Grain Reserve Program, the need for railroads to make better use of their freight cars, and changes in user charges to fund special benefit services. GAO is evaluating the nationwide cooperative extension system. GAO also reported on the need for centralized control in the National Plant Germplasm System; the need for better data on which to base commodity purchases and donations; the status of corrective actions taken on past recommendations contained in past reports dealing with fraud, abuse, and mismanagement in several food assistance programs; the status of the Food for Development Program; the status of the concessional food sales program; and improvements needed in the expanded food and nutrition program. GAO is reviewing the Resource Conservation Program to assess whether program activities could be carried out under other Federal programs or by other delivery systems. GAO reported on cost sharing for future water resource projects, the financing of the Rural Electrification Administration, the Farmers Home Administration's direct lending activities, and the use of alcohol as a motor vehicle fuel.

114750

Status Report on U.S. Participation in the International Fund for Agricultural Development. ID-81-33. March 27, 1981. 14 pp. *Staff Study* by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Promote International Food and Agriculture Development Assistance (1730).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: International Financial Programs (155.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Treasury; Department of State; Department of Agriculture; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries; United Nations: International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Abstract: The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was established as a specialized agency of the United Nations to mobilize an additional \$1 billion to attack the problem of world hunger. Contributions to IFAD were to be equitably shared by countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and by countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. IFAD is expected to commit its available funds by mid-1981 and is seeking a replenishment to continue its operations. The two groups of donors have been unable to reach an agreement on equitable burden sharing. *Findings/Conclusions:* IFAD operations have been consistent with its Articles of Agreement and U.S. objectives. Some concern was expressed initially regarding duplication of work of existing multilateral development institutions, thereby becoming another international lending bureaucracy. The Articles provided assurance that this would not occur. To avoid duplication, IFAD has entered into cooperative agreements with several international institutions. These cooperative agreements permit IFAD to draw upon the services and experienced staffs of the organizations to assist in the identification, preparation, and administration of its agricultural project loans. The size of the IFAD staff was originally planned to remain small, with only 25 to 30 professionals. The staff has grown considerably and now exceeds this amount significantly. Congress has expressed concern over the excessive growth resulting from the project cycle involved. Each project goes through four basic stages: (1) identification; (2) preparation; (3) appraisal; and (4) implementation and supervision. IFAD officials indicated that the staff would probably continue to grow at a modest rate as the IFAD loan and grant portfolio grows. IFAD operates with multilateral development banks (MDB), and the Department of the Treasury expects IFAD projects to do well under MDB supervision. Officials of other agencies feel it is too soon to venture an opinion on the outcome of IFAD projects.

114764

Foreign Investment in U.S. Seafood Processing Industry Difficult To Assess. CED-81-65; B-202302. March 30, 1981. 32 pp. plus 9 appendices (42 pp.)

Report to Rep. Les AuCoin, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; Ad Hoc Select Subcommittee on Maritime Education and Training; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: International Affairs: Monetary Issues, International Investment, and Other Capital Flows (0606); Food: Federal Government Food Production System (1711)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Marine Fisheries Service; Bureau of Economic Analysis; Department of Commerce; Office of Foreign Investment in the United States; Bureau of the Census.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Ad Hoc Select Subcommittee on Maritime Education and Training; Rep. Les AuCoin.

Authority: American Fisheries Promotion Act (P.L. 96-561). Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.).

Abstract: Recent increases in foreign investment in the U.S. seafood processing industry have caused concern among industry and public officials that U.S. owners and managers are losing control of the industry. They fear that foreign investors may unduly influence U.S. production, marketing, pricing, and fisheries development. GAO studied the extent and nature of foreign investment and its impact on the seafood processing industry. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO identified 61 U.S. seafood processing firms with foreign ownership, and 27 seafood processing firms which had loans from foreign sources. Federal and State Government information on the extent of foreign investment in seafood processors is incomplete. Data classification procedures, consolidated reporting practices, and filing exemptions prevent a complete and accurate disclosure of foreign ownership in a specific industry such as seafood processing. The Commerce Department office with primary responsibility for analyzing the effects of foreign investment has not studied the seafood processing industry because it considers it to be a minor industry. Most of the States covered by the review did not require firms doing business in their States to disclose foreign investment. GAO found no consensus on the effects of foreign investment on seafood processors. Many respondents to a GAO questionnaire were reluctant to answer certain questions or said they had no basis to judge the impact of foreign investment. GAO noted that: (1) a high percentage of foreign investment originates from relatively few companies within one country, Japan; (2) foreign investors may use a variety of indirect investment methods to gain control of seafood processors; (3) the percentage of the industry's total output by processors with foreign investment is unknown; (4) foreign representatives are sometimes on the boards of directors of U.S. seafood processors; and (5) foreign investors may specify certain provisions in loan agreements with U.S. processors.

114766

What Can Be Done To Check the Growth of Federal Entitlement and Indexed Spending? PAD-81-21; B-115398. March 3, 1981. 5 pp. plus 3 appendices (34 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Program and Budget Information for Congressional Use (3400).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services (500.0); Health (550.0); Income Security (600.0); General Government (800.0).

Organization Concerned: Office of Management and Budget; Executive Office of the President.

Congressional Relevance: Congress

Authority: Social Security Disability Amendments of 1980. Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254 (1970). *Bennett v. Butts*, 386 F. Supp. 10 (D. Minn. 1974).

Abstract: To assist Congress in its effort to find ways to reduce the budget, GAO offers seven basic approaches to controlling that portion of the budget consisting of entitlements and indexed spending. These approaches include: (1) eliminate a program altogether; (2) limit the indexing of program benefits; (3) tighten eligibility criteria to target available funds to the most needy; (4) reduce the level of benefits; (5) place a cap on the program's total spending; (6) limit spending to amounts annually appropriated; and (7) improve the efficiency with which a program is administered. There are three approaches for altering the present practice of automatic, full indexing utilizing the Consumer Price Index (CPI) that GAO believes merit early consideration as part of the congressional action on spending reductions. The first approach would give the President and Congress the discretion to modify the amount of the index through the budget process. Authorizing the President to use differential rates of indexation at different benefit levels would overcome the problem of adversely affecting the lives of the truly needy. The second approach would limit the adjustment to the level of the average increase in worker pay or the CPI, whichever is less. This alternative moves away from the exclusive use of a price index and would have wage earners and entitlement recipients share equally in the burdens imposed by falling real incomes. The third approach would substitute for the present CPI an index judged more efficient in measuring changes in the cost of living of those receiving entitlements or make adjustments in the index to compensate for its alleged statistical deficiencies. Despite specific drawbacks, any of these three indexing options would enable Congress to gain increasing control over the growth of this segment of the budget. GAO believes the first option is preferable because it permits the President to recommend and Congress to consider the cost of living increases as part of the budget process. These three approaches would not apply to any of the entitlement programs that are not indexed.

114823

[S. 677, the Civil Service Retirement Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1981]. April 1, 1981. 6 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.).

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Civil Service and General Services Subcommittee; by Clifford I. Gould, Director, GAO Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Civil Service and General Services Subcommittee.

Authority: S. 6610 (97th Cong.). S. 677 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: Under present law, all civil service annuities are adjusted semiannually by the full percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index. Under S. 677, retirees and survivors age 65 and over would continue to receive full, semiannual adjustments; however, those retirees and survivors under age 65 would receive adjustments only once a year. GAO believes that the proposed legislation would reduce the retirement system's costs considerably. GAO believes, however, that retaining semiannual annuity adjustments for disability retirees is inconsistent with the recently enacted annual adjustment process for Federal employees with job-related disabilities.

GAO also believes that, while further study may be needed to assess the impact of applying similar changes to the military retirement system, limiting such a major policy change only to civilian retirees is inappropriate. GAO believes that full, once-a-year adjustments to all Federal retirement programs would be preferable because: (1) all retirees and survivors would be treated equally; (2) the adjustment provisions would be consistent with both the Federal workers' compensation and social security programs; and (3) the provisions would be more consistent with prevailing non-Federal practices.

114829

Number of Undocumented Aliens Residing in the United States Unknown. GGD-81-56; B-125051. April 6, 1981. 4 pp. plus 1 appendix (3 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Law Enforcement and Crime Prevention: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0551).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Administration of Justice: Federal Law Enforcement Activities (751.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Justice; Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: P.L. 95-412.

Abstract: A reliable estimate of the number of undocumented aliens residing in the United States is not available and is unlikely in the immediate future. The size of the undocumented alien population will be an important consideration for Congress in reviewing the findings and recommendations of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy. Legislators may wish to weigh the desirability and feasibility of any proposed actions on a best and worst case basis. What may seem right premised on an undocumented alien population of 1 or 2 million could be inappropriate if this population was actually 10 million or more.

114830

Improved Collections Can Reduce Federal and District Government Food Stamp Program Costs. GGD-81-31; B-201283. April 3, 1981. 30 pp. plus 2 appendices (11 pp.).

Report to Marion S. Barry, Jr., Mayor, District of Columbia; by William J. Anderson, Director, GAO General Government Division.

Issue Area: Food: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1751).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Purpose Fiscal Assistance; Other General Purpose Fiscal Assistance (852.0).

Organization Concerned: District of Columbia: Department of Housing and Community Development; District of Columbia: Department of Human Services; Department of Agriculture; District of Columbia; District of Columbia: Office of Fair Hearings.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on District of Columbia; House Committee on Appropriations; District of Columbia Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Governmental Efficiency and the District of Columbia Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations; District of Columbia Subcommittee.

Authority: Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act (District of Columbia) (P.L. 93-198; 87 Stat. 774). Food Stamp Act of 1964 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO studied collection procedures for amounts owed to the District of Columbia by food stamp vendors for cash and food stamp shortages and by recipients who were overissued stamps.

Findings/Conclusions: The District has collected a minimal amount due from food stamp vendors and recipients. Inadequate collection efforts, lack of systems for identifying improper issuances and for monitoring collection efforts, and poor controls over recipient participation cards contributed to the problem. As a result, District and Department of Agriculture costs were unnecessarily increased. The District was not claiming all reimbursable costs incurred in administering the program. Amounts owed by recipients may be written off as uncollectible after required collection efforts have been exhausted. There are no criteria, however, to provide guidance concerning maximum timeframes within which various processing steps should be accomplished, and there is no reporting system to monitor the progress of claims processing or highlight problem claims. The District has not identified and attempted to collect overissuances resulting from duplicate redemptions or from redemptions of expired, altered, and unsigned participation cards. The District's participation card system does not provide control over the cards, results in increased costs, and does not safeguard the cards to prevent unauthorized use. Transaction cards which have been returned by vendors were improperly filed and stored without adequate physical control to prevent reintroducing the cards into the system. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Mayor should instruct the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to execute food stamp contracts with all vendors and obtain documentation that vendors have secured insurance and bonding coverage required by their contracts. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to revise the filing system for transacted cards so that they are accessible by serial or case number and provide secured storage to prevent their reintroduction into the system. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to require that the proposed computerized report on claims be modified to show the status of each claim, the length of time the claim was in each status, and whether the claim was progressing in accordance with established timeframes. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to expand collection efforts for large outstanding amounts to include personal contacts with recipients who do not respond to inquiries concerning food stamp overissuances or do not execute or comply with repayment agreements. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to assure that the Office of Fair Hearings expedites food stamp fraud hearings and reports on the status of all food stamp fraud cases until the backlog has been eliminated. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to establish a system to sample redeemed participation cards to evaluate the extent of compliance with program requirements concerning expired, altered, and unsigned cards. As appropriate, redemption of expired, altered, and unsigned cards should be considered as unauthorized issuances for which issuers are liable for the value of the stamps and any fees paid. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to reemphasize to issuers and personnel working in the Food Stamp Program the importance of assuring that participation cards presented for redemption have not expired, have not been altered, and have been signed by eligible recipients. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to devise a system that will insure that all voided cards are rendered unusable, are appropriately recorded, and are destroyed within established timeframes. The Mayor should instruct the Directors of DHS and the Department of Housing and Community Services (DHCD) to finalize the agreement under which DHCD issues food stamps at its locations to enable DHS to recover reimbursable administrative costs from the Department of Agriculture. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to establish a system to record and control serial numbers of participation cards received, distributed, and used. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to establish a procedure to submit claims for unpaid shortages to vendor insurance companies where appropriate. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to include offsetting agency food stamp shortages against moneys due that agency by DHS for operating such outlets. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to establish a policy and procedures for initiating and settling claims for food stamp

shortages incurred at District agency issuing outlets. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to terminate the vendor's participation in the program after taking steps to minimize impact on food stamp recipients served by the vendor if he is unable to reach such agreements with a private vendor within a reasonable period of time. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to establish maximum time frames within which certain claim processing steps must be accomplished. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to investigate all shortages and institute recovery actions when District employees are determined responsible. The Mayor should instruct the Director of DHS to adopt a policy to consistently offset shortages against transaction fees earned by the vendors. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to remind issuers that they are liable and will not be paid fees for improper issuances. The Mayor should require the Director of DHS to establish controls over unused cards in the hands of the computer operators.

114851

[*Claim for Temporary Duty Travel Expenses*]. B-198930 April 6, 1981. 5 pp.

Decision re: Frederick A. Kalhammer; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of State.

Authority: Travel Expense Act of 1949 (5 U.S.C. 5702 et seq.; 63 Stat. 166). 56 Comp. Gen. 1015 Executive Order 10970 Executive Order 11294. Dep't of State S.R. §072.1. Dep't of State S.R. §072.31. Dep't of State S.R. §073.2. Dep't of State S.R. §074.3.

Abstract: An employee of the Agency for International Development appealed a Claims Division settlement which denied his claim for additional actual expense reimbursement incident to his temporary duty in Zaire. While he was on the temporary duty, the State Department reduced the reimbursement rate for Zaire. His contention was that, since State erroneously reduced the rate while he was on temporary assignment, GAO should direct State to rectify the error and restore his reimbursement rate to its correct level. The reduction in rates resulted from deficient information provided to State. Upon receipt of correct information, State increased the per diem rate in Zaire. The State Department acknowledged that no reduction in the per diem rate would have been made during the employee's temporary duty had it been notified of the rise in the cost of living in Zaire. In this regard, the Department of State is required to review all civilian price schedules received. The State Department denied the employee's claim for additional reimbursement on the ground that GAO prohibits retroactive increases in allowances. Since the downward adjustment in the per diem rate occurred through an administrative error on the part of the State Department, an exception to the rule which prohibits retroactive increases in allowances may be permitted in this case. The employee's supplemental travel voucher for reimbursement of additional actual subsistence expenses may be certified for payment on the basis of the previously applicable reimbursement rates in Zaire.

114867

[*GAO Reviews of the Food Stamp Program*]. April 2, 1981. 15 pp. plus 1 appendix (29 pp.).

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: There are 13 major Federal domestic programs that provide food-related assistance to needy Americans. The large and accelerating costs of the programs and their piecemeal authorization and administration point to a need to examine the programs' interrelationships and effectiveness. Substantial savings would be possible by eliminating the overlap between the food stamp and school lunch subsidies. Some low-income families participate simultaneously in as many as six different Federal programs providing food assistance. This multiple participation is sanctioned in the legislation authorizing most food programs. Some needy households could receive more in food benefits than the average amounts American families of comparable size spend for food. Alternative approaches could be used to eliminate these overlapping benefits using offsets in either the food stamp or school lunch programs. The legislation and regulations governing the various Federal food assistance programs contain major differences in basic eligibility criteria and procedures. Potential savings could be gained by the use of individualized food stamp benefits. The Department of Agriculture has not taken any action on a GAO recommendation to establish demonstration projects to evaluate the increased administrative cost and error, if any, that would result from an individualized system of food stamp allotments. To deal with fraud and over-issuances, the Food Stamp Act of 1977 should be revised to permit longer disqualification periods for recipients administratively found guilty of fraud and permit States to retain a portion of all over-issuances recovered instead of only those involving recipient fraud recoveries as is now the case. For fiscal year 1980, households containing a striker received about \$37 million in food coupons. The use of photo identification cards and calculating eligibility on the basis of income in a prior period would be the preferred new administrative procedures. GAO advocated improved program management of the program's workfare requirement. Some of the categories of recipients who are exempted from the program's workfare participation could be eliminated, the time allowed for a job search shortened, and sanctions for workfare noncompliance strengthened. Delays in modifying obvious program defects should not be allowed to continue.

114875

[*Increase in Hourly Rate Charged by Department of Agriculture for Resident Inspectors at Egg Processing Plants*]. CED-81-82; B-202425. March 11, 1981. Released April 7, 1981. 4 pp.

Report to Sen. Roger W. Jepsen, by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Improvements in Commodity Grading Efforts (1720).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Quality Service; Poultry and Dairy Quality Division.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Roger W. Jepsen

Authority: Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. OMB Circular A-25.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's justification for a 40-percent increase in hourly fees for voluntary poultry and egg grading services. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the increase in the hourly fee, which was the first increase since 1977, was needed because of: (1) an earlier Food Safety and Quality Service decision not to increase the fee to cover a projected loss of \$510,000 in fiscal year 1980; (2) an underestimate of about \$440,000 in the net loss that the program would incur in fiscal year 1980; and (3) large increases in fiscal year 1981 costs due to an upgrading of poultry and egg graders, a Federal pay raise, and increases in travel-related costs for relief graders. In addition, GAO found that the hourly rates charged for most other

commodity grading services either have been increased recently or are in the process of being increased. In light of the increases in program costs since 1977, the Department of Agriculture was justified in increasing the hourly fee charged for poultry and egg grading.

114878

Poor Planning and Management Hamper Effectiveness of AID's Program To Increase Fertilizer Use in Bangladesh. ID-81-26; B-202490 March 31, 1981. Released April 7, 1981. 36 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Report to Sen. Charles H. Percy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs. Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630); Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Maintain Strong U.S. Agricultural Commercial Exports (1731).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; World Bank.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Sen. Charles H. Percy.

Abstract: The Agency for International Development (AID) has undertaken a project to improve the supply and distribution of fertilizer in Bangladesh. The aim of the project is to help Bangladesh meet its goal of achieving foodgrain self-sufficiency by 1985. GAO reviewed project planning and implementation. **Findings/Conclusions:** Some progress has been made to improve fertilizer distribution and use, but the project has not achieved its goal of an annual 15-percent increase in fertilizer sales. Fertilizer imports have not been adequately planned and coordinated with domestic fertilizer production and storage capacity. The project's new marketing system has made limited progress in improving farmer access and reducing distribution costs. Construction of storage facilities is significantly behind schedule, and those warehouses which have been built are fewer and smaller than planned. Plans to provide bulk-handling facilities have not been adequately planned. Plans by AID to purchase portable bagging machines for bulk fertilizer imports may duplicate similar efforts planned by another agency. Current fertilizer imports are not sufficient to justify the machines. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of AID should assist and encourage the Government of Bangladesh to: (1) employ a more systematic approach for planning imports, one that gives proper weight to factors of fertilizer supply and demand in a way that is responsive to changing conditions; (2) pursue a diammonium phosphate (DAP) marketing strategy to include more widespread and consistent informational promotion, on-farm experiments to demonstrate the advantages of using DAP, and consideration of price incentives to purchase and use DAP; and (3) develop reliable, nationwide data on the most effective types, proportions, and combinations of fertilizer to use on the main crops grown in Bangladesh. The Administrator of AID should encourage and assist the Government of Bangladesh to: (1) systematically collect information on dealer functions and coverage under the new marketing system and use this data to help make necessary changes to ensure that farmers have equal access to available fertilizer when needed; (2) determine how the dealer discount policy should be revised or modified to more accurately reflect actual project and overhead costs to dealers and to allow a reasonable profit; and (3) gradually remove officially administered retail sales prices, as long as doing so would not reduce the equal access of fertilizers to all farmers. The Administrator of AID should act to coordinate and integrate current AID plans for providing temporary bagging machines with

similar efforts of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, including securing appropriate commitments from the host government and other donors for effective equipment use. The Administrator of AID should act to establish procedures and requirements calling for collaborative project efforts among the contractor, the host government, and the AID mission and providing a mechanism to speed the approval process, resolving differences as they occur.

114879

[Information on Strikers' Participation in the Food Stamp Program]. CED-81-85; B-202505 March 26, 1981. Released April 7, 1981. 8 pp.

Report to Rep. William L. Dickinson; Rep. E. Thomas Coleman; Sen. Strom Thurmond; Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: How Can the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program Be Improved (1722).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. William L. Dickinson; Rep. E. Thomas Coleman; Sen. Strom Thurmond; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: H. Rept. 95-464.

Abstract: GAO was asked to gather available data on participation in the Food Stamp Program by households with members involved in labor-management disputes. Specifically, the data were to include information on the number of participating households containing a striker, the value of food stamp benefits provided to such households, and fluctuations in strikers' participation. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, in the 50 States and the District of Columbia, for the five 1-month periods for which data were available: (1) the percentage of food stamp households containing a striker ranged from 0.29 to 2.1 percent of the total food stamp households; (2) of all persons on strike, the percentage of strikers who participated in the Food Stamp Program ranged from 3.6 to 36.4 percent; and (3) food stamp benefits provided to strikers' households may have amounted to \$37 million in fiscal year 1980.

114880

Pension Fund Investment in Agricultural Land. CED-81-86; B-202446. March 26, 1981. Released April 2, 1981. 6 pp. plus 3 enclosures (26 pp.).

Report to Rep. Frederick W. Richmond; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. Thomas R. Harkin; Rep. Thomas A. Daschle; Rep. E. Thomas Coleman; Rep. Berkley W. Bedell; Rep. Beryl Anthony, Jr.; Rep. Daniel K. Akaka; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Best Management and Planning Techniques for the Food System and Use of the Techniques in Setting Federal Food Policy (1733).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; American Agricultural Investment Management Co.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. William M. Thomas; Rep. Frederick W. Richmond; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. Thomas R. Harkin; Rep. Thomas A. Daschle; Rep. E. Thomas Coleman; Rep. Berkley W. Bedell; Rep. Beryl Anthony, Jr.; Rep. Daniel K. Akaka.

Authority: Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978

(P.L. 95-460). Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-406).

Abstract: GAO was requested to evaluate the impact that the American Agricultural Investment Management (AAIM) Company's plan to seek investment opportunities in farmland for pension funds is likely to have on the family farm structure. Issues considered concerned: (1) the attractiveness of agricultural land as an investment for nonfarm capital; (2) whether U.S. agriculture has the necessary capital; (3) the structure of AAIM; (4) the proposed business and plans of AAIM; and (5) the potential immediate and long-range impact of pension fund investment in agricultural land. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) although real estate in general has become a progressively more attractive investment during the last decade, agricultural land does not appear to be as attractive an investment as other commercial real estate; (2) according to the Department of Agriculture, U.S. agriculture is not lacking in capital; (3) AAIM provides advice on acquiring farm properties, manages farm properties, and invests farm operating cash in short-term debt securities; (4) AAIM plans to charge a one-time fee of 2.5 percent of the property value for advice on acquiring farm property and an annual fee of .3 percent of the value of the assets for managing farm properties and short-term debt securities, and (5) Federal, State, and local laws and regulations place certain limitations on the types of investments pension funds can make. While it is difficult to assess the likely impact of the AAIM plan to seek investment opportunities in farmland through pension fund investment, indications are that: (1) about \$1 of every \$4,429 of pension assets is now in direct investment in farmland; (2) pension fund fiduciaries do not intend to increase the percentage of their portfolios devoted to farmland; and (3) the fact that no pension funds are subscribing to the company's services is evidence that the pension investment plan is not attractive and does not currently have a significant impact on the structure of agriculture.

114908

The Department of Agriculture Can Minimize the Risk of Potential Crop Failures. CED-81-75; B-202384. April 10, 1981. 27 pp. plus 3 appendices (8 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food; Adaptability of the Food Production System To Maintain Productivity Under Changed Conditions (1728).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture; Farm Income Stabilization (351.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Research and Marketing Act (60 Stat. 1082)

Abstract: GAO reviewed the need for improved management of plant genetic resources to minimize crop damage due to disease, insects, or adverse weather conditions. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a number of programs meant to reduce the risks resulting from the vulnerability of crops. **Findings/Conclusions:** Because producers use relatively few high-yielding varieties, plant vulnerability has increased over the past 50 years. A group of Federal, State, and private programs called the National Plant Germplasm System has been established to reduce the vulnerability and to further improve plant varieties. However, this system lacks a sense of direction and purpose and does not have effective, centralized management. The problems experienced by the system in the collection, storage, and maintenance areas included: (1) the lack of systematic collection of new germplasm; (2) inadequate storage facilities; (3) incomplete and sporadic evaluation of the distinguishing characteristics of stored germplasm; and (4) possible permanent loss of some genetic stock which is not regularly replenished by periodic growing out of seed. Critical policy questions have not been addressed, indications are that mechanisms are inadequate, and comprehensive plans have not been made to cope with present

and future problems. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should centralize authority over the Federal portion of the National Plant Germplasm System with that central authority having responsibility for all USDA-funded germplasm activities. We are not recommending that program activities be collapsed, but that management authority for planning, budget, and personnel be centralized, possibly within the Science and Education Administration. Until such action is taken, the major issues of genetic vulnerability and variability cannot be effectively addressed. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that the National Plant Germplasm System's first priority be development of a comprehensive, long-range plan addressing: (1) assessment of the genetic vulnerability of major crops; (2) determination of the gaps in current germplasm collections in terms of availability and evaluation; and (3) assurance that stored germplasm is available by making sure that the stock is evaluated, that an information system is in place so that the information can be disseminated, and that, when necessary, prebreeding is done so that desirable genetic characteristics from otherwise undesirable types are transferred into a more suitable genetic background.

114922

Measurement of Homeownership Costs in the Consumer Price Index Should Be Changed. PAD-81-12; B-202280 April 16, 1981. 58 pp. plus 5 appendices (18 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Domestic Housing and Community Development; Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (2151), Data Collected From Non-Federal Sources; Federal Price Statistics Program (3108); Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches. Current Macroeconomic Events, Problems, and Policies of Interest to the Congress (4031).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services; Other Labor Services (505.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means; House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; House Committee on Appropriations. Treasury-Postal Service-General Government Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Finance; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Treasury, Postal Service, General Government Subcommittee; Congress.

Abstract: Many economists, members of Congress, and others have questioned whether the consumer price index (CPI) as presently constructed by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is an appropriate measure of the rate of price change for the uses to which it is put. In particular, they have charged that the present method of measuring homeownership costs does not accurately reflect the rate of price change experienced by homeowners in paying for their housing. GAO determined the validity of these concerns and evaluated alternative methods of measuring changes in homeownership costs in CPI. **Findings/Conclusions:** Homeownership costs have a relative importance of about 23 percent in CPI. The present homeownership component of CPI measures changes in the cost of purchasing, financing, and maintaining houses. Because of its emphasis on these cost changes the CPI homeownership component does not measure either the average change that all homeowners experience or the change in cost for an average homeowner. In addition, the present approach to measuring homeownership costs allows no logical determination of the weight assigned to expenditures on housing in calculating the overall CPI. User cost and nominal outlays are two widely discussed conceptual approaches to measuring the cost of consuming housing services. The user approach measures full economic costs of consuming

housing services. The nominal outlays method includes only out-of-pocket expenses, not the full economic costs that homeowners incur. Rental equivalence and a user cost index are two methods of measuring user cost. Rental equivalence views the user as the rental income homeowners forgo by residing in their houses rather than renting them to others. Both the rental equivalence and nominal outlays approaches to measuring the cost of consuming owner-occupied housing services have substantial merit. BLS currently publishes five experimental measures of CPI in which homeownership costs are measured by rental equivalence, user cost indexes, and nominal outlays. **Recommendation To Congress:** The appropriations committees of Congress should consider favorably any BLS requests for additional funds for the purpose of modifying the homeownership components of the CPI as GAO has recommended. If BLS revises CPI-U but not CPI-W, then Congress should rely on the revised CPI-U in forming economic policy and amend the legislation, if necessary, to use the revised CPI-U as the index by which social security payments, Civil Service and other Government retirement pensions, and other entitlement and transfer programs indexed in the CPI are adjusted. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Labor should direct the Commissioner of BLS to amend indexes of consumer prices published by BLS by substituting a flow-of-services approach to measuring the cost of consuming owner-occupied services for the present method of measuring homeownership costs. The Secretary of Labor should direct BLS to continue publishing CPI-W in its current form for a specified period of time while modifying CPI-U as recommended if it is determined that the existence of long-term contracts incorporating CPI-W and a widespread desire among private sector groups to have available an index of consumer prices using the present approach provide sufficient reasons for maintaining such an index.

114923

Department of Agriculture Should Have More Authority To Assess User Charges. CED-81-49; B-201667. April 16, 1981. 52 pp. plus 2 appendices (13 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Improvements in Commodity Grading Efforts (1720); Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: Effective Employment of User Charges by the Government (4066).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Food Safety and Quality Service; Federal Grain Inspection Service; Agricultural Marketing Service; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Marketing Act (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.). Naval Stores Act (7 U.S.C. 91 et seq.). Independent Offices Appropriations Act, 1952. Cotton Reports and Statistics Act (7 U.S.C. 473a). Tobacco Inspection Act (7 U.S.C. 511 et seq.).

Abstract: The Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides a wide range of marketing and regulatory services. Marked differences exist in the degree to which recipients bear the costs of these services. As a result, certain sectors of the agricultural marketing industry are receiving preferential treatment at the taxpayers' expense.

Findings/Conclusions: If recipients were charged for all costs except those which can be readily identified with public benefits, the current inconsistencies and inequities would be eliminated and Federal appropriations could be reduced. The Department could also realize substantial savings if it were to move to a system of periodic unannounced inspections at federally inspected meat and poultry processing plants and if the plants were required to have total in-plant quality control systems. Current inconsistencies and

inequities in the Department's application of user charges are caused by differences in the legislative funding provisions covering individual programs and problems in implementing user charges under the so-called User Charge Statute (title V of the Independent Offices Appropriation Act) when no specific legislative authority exists. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to require all federally inspected meat and poultry processing plants to develop and implement quality control systems. Congress should amend existing legislation to authorize USDA to charge importers fees which cover all costs of inspecting and testing imported birds (both commercial and pet) and other animals. Congress should amend the Grain Standards Act, the Cotton Statistics and Estimates Act of 1927, and the Tobacco Inspection Act of 1935 to delete provisions that require appropriations funding and/or limit the use of user charges. Congress should amend the Warehouse Act to provide for user funding of periodic USDA examinations. The amendment should require recovery of all program costs. Congress should either amend the User Charge Statute or enact new general user charge legislation to make it clear that an agency may set fees to recover the full cost of a program that primarily benefits identifiable users. Congress should discontinue providing special appropriations to defray a portion of the supervision costs incurred in the poultry and fresh fruit and vegetable grading programs. Congress should repeal the Tobacco Seed and Plant Exportation Act of 1940. Congress should repeal the Naval Stores Act. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that a study be made to determine the cost effectiveness of a user fee system for the USDA-printed market news reports. The study should be independent, made by individuals who are not under the Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Transportation Services. If the study shows that the administrative problems can be resolved and that the administrative costs would not be excessive, the Secretary should implement a fee system. If not, the Secretary should forward the study to OMB for resolution of differences between USDA and Department of Commerce funding methods. The Secretary of Agriculture should determine whether inspections of imported seed required under the Seed Act primarily benefit the seed importers. If so, the Secretary should propose to Congress amendments to the Act which would authorize user fees for the inspections. Upon enactment of the amendments, the Secretary should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service to develop and implement a user charge. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that an independent study be made to develop objective criteria for setting and adjusting fees charged for plant variety certifications. The study should determine how much of total program costs could be passed on to applicants without severely limiting participation by applicants with limited financial resources. The Secretary should then direct the Administrator of APHIS to set and periodically adjust the certification fee on the basis of these criteria. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to charge user fees which cover the costs of phytosanitary inspections. The Administrator should do so either under the authority contained in the User Charge Statute or by seeking specific legislative authority.

114973

[Views on S. 451, Farmland Protection Policy Act]. B-202612. April 16, 1981. 2 pp.

Letter to Sen. William V. Roth, Jr., Chairman, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.

Authority: S. 451 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO believes that the proposed legislation should be a useful measure in helping to mitigate the losses of Federal land caused by Federal programs. However, GAO believes that a broader approach is also needed and recommends that Congress: (1) formulate a national policy for protecting and retaining prime and other farmland; (2) set a national goal as to the amount and class of farmland that should be preserved to meet current and future needs; (3) periodically assess whether the loss of farmland is eroding the maintenance of established goals; and (4) delineate the role the Federal Government can and should play in guiding and helping State and local efforts to retain farmland.

115052

[*GAO Reviews of Food Stamp Program*]. March 30, 1981. 15 pp plus 1 appendix (13 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: There are 13 major Federal domestic programs that provide food-related assistance to needy Americans. The large and accelerating costs of the programs and their piecemeal authorization and administration point to a need to examine the programs' interrelationships and effectiveness. Substantial savings would be possible by eliminating the overlap between the food stamp and school lunch subsidies. Some low-income families participate simultaneously in as many as six different Federal programs providing food assistance. This multiple participation is sanctioned in the legislation authorizing most food programs. Some needy households could receive more in food benefits than the average amounts American families of comparable size spend for food. Alternative approaches could be used to eliminate these overlapping benefits using offsets in either the food stamp or school lunch programs. The legislation and regulations governing the various Federal food assistance programs contain major differences in basic eligibility criteria and procedures. Potential savings could be gained by the use of individualized food stamp benefits. The Department of Agriculture has not taken any action on a GAO recommendation to establish demonstration projects to evaluate the increased administrative cost and error that could result from an individualized system of food stamp allotments. To deal with fraud and over-issuances, the Food Stamp Act of 1977 should be revised to permit longer disqualification periods for recipients administratively found guilty of fraud and to permit States to retain a portion of all over-issuances recovered instead of only those involving recipient fraud recoveries as is now the case. For fiscal year 1980, households containing a striker received about \$37 million in food coupons. The use of photo identification cards and the calculation of eligibility on the basis of income in a prior period would be the preferred new administrative procedure. GAO advocated improved program management of the program's workfare requirement. Some of the categories of recipients who are exempted from the program's workfare participation could be eliminated, the time allowed for a job search shortened, and sanctions for workfare noncompliance strengthened. Delays in modifying obvious program defects should not be allowed to continue.

115100

[*Views on Proposed Food Stamp Program Legislation in S. 884*].

B-202967. April 29, 1981. 10 pp plus 1 enclosure (4 pp.).

Letter to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Social Security Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Social Security Amendments of 1977 (P.L. 95-216). Tax Reform Act. Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-249). Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (P.L. 96-249). Federal Unemployment Tax Act (P.L. 95-216). Social Security Act (P.L. 96-249) S. 884 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO views on the proposed Food Stamp Program legislation in S. 884 were presented. Title XII of this bill offers substantial opportunities for cost savings in the program. It incorporates a number of recommendations that GAO had previously made and would make several changes that food stamp officials at the State and local levels had frequently requested to improve program management. Purchase requirements would be reinstated. These would apply when an applicant household's income was low enough to qualify for food stamps but not low enough to be eligible for the entire allotment amount considered sufficient for adequate nutrition for the household for the month. The bill would make basic changes in the benefit structure of the program to recognize the fact that not all persons require the same food intake. It would adjust benefits according to age and sex of household members. While GAO agreed with the basic concept, it suggested that it should be tested before it was adopted nationally. Sections of the bill would remove current barriers to treating low-income energy assistance cash payments and food stamp benefits as household income. States would be required to establish a workfare program in which food stamp recipients would have to work at public service jobs for the value of their food stamp benefits. The bill would substitute a 40-hour work week criteria for the earned income exemption now in effect for the demonstration projects. The law gives new workfare referrals a 30-day job search period before they can be assigned to workfare jobs. GAO believes that the provision that would allow verified job search activities of up to 8 hours a week as a credit for work performed could greatly inhibit the effectiveness of the work requirement. The bill would allow State agencies to help workfare participants obtain suitable employment outside the workfare program and increase the penalties for recipient fraud.

115126

[*Better Data Needed To Determine the Extent to Which Herbicides Should Be Used on Forest Lands*]. CED-81-46; B-197558. April 17, 1981. Released April 27, 1981. 51 pp. plus 5 appendices (14 pp.). **Report** to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield; Rep. James H. Weaver, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Forests, Family Farms and Energy Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Harmful Effects From Exposure to Toxic Pollutants--Reducing Risks to Humans and the Environment (2211); Land Use Planning and Control: Management of Federal Lands (2306).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Forest Service; Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Forests, Family Farms and Energy Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations. Interior Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Forestry, Water

Resources and Environment Subcommittee; *Senate Committee on Appropriations' Interior Subcommittee; Rep. James H. Weaver; Sen. Mark O. Hatfield.*

Authority: Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National) (42 U.S.C. 4321). BLM Manual 9222. Forest Service Manual 2476.41. Forest Service Manual 2155.3.

Abstract: Vegetation management programs and practices on forest lands managed by the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management were reviewed. The main areas of discussion were the use of herbicides, the controversy over herbicides, the controversy's effect on forest land managers, and the need for both agencies to take actions that would provide better information for making vegetation management decisions. **Findings/Conclusions:** The use of herbicides for managing unwanted vegetation on forest lands has become a public controversy. In some cases, their use has been restricted. Growing opposition stemming from unanswered questions about herbicides' health and environmental effects could result in further restrictions. Although it has been shown that nonherbicide methods can be used to control unwanted vegetation in national forests, the extent to which these methods can replace herbicides is not known. Serious information gaps exist relating to the costs of vegetation management methods and their relative effectiveness. Most forests GAO visited had some success with alternatives to herbicides. However, site-specific data were not available to identify why methods had succeeded in one area but not in another. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should instruct the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, respectively, to ensure that (1) those forests and districts relying heavily on herbicides increase the use of nonherbicide methods; and (2) adequate site-specific pre-treatment and post-treatment information is gathered and evaluated. The Secretaries should also instruct the agency heads to develop more objective criteria for determining the need for release. The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should instruct the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, respectively, to gather more comprehensive and complete cost data on their site preparation and release projects.

115134

Food Bibliography. CED-81-73. April 1981. 273 pp. by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food (1700).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Abstract: This bibliography includes information on documents directly or indirectly related to food, agriculture, and/or nutrition that have been released by GAO. The documents included are representative of the broad interrelationship which exists between the food area and other issue areas of concern to GAO such as health, transportation, energy, defense, and international affairs.

115169

Congressional Guidance and Better Federal Coordination Would Improve Marine Mammal Management. CED-81-52; B-198126. May 11, 1981. 96 pp. plus 10 appendices (21 pp.).

Report to Rep. John B. Breaux, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Institutional

Arrangements for Implementing Environmental Laws and Considering Trade-Offs (2210); Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: Benefits, Costs, and Other Impacts of Regulation and the Approximate Regulatory Alternatives (4010).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306 0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of Commerce; Marine Mammal Commission; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee, Rep. John D. Dingell; Rep. John B. Breaux. Authority:* Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.). Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1513 et seq.). Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969. Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976

Abstract: GAO was requested to review the activities and effectiveness of the Marine Mammal Commission (MMC) and the Departments of Commerce and the Interior in fulfilling the Marine Mammal Protection Act's (MMPA) requirements. **Findings/Conclusions:** Under the MMPA, many Federal and State actions have been initiated to help ensure the protection and, in some cases, recovery of marine mammals. However, progress has been slow and improvements are needed to satisfactorily fulfill the MMPA objectives and goals. The review of selected species disclosed a need for amendments to the MMPA to facilitate marine mammal management and for improvements in the administration of the marine mammal program by the regulatory agencies. Hunting by Natives is not controlled unless the species is depleted; however, such hunting is for subsistence and handicraft purposes only and is not done in a wasteful manner. Because fishery resources and marine mammals interact, conflicts occur in the administration of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act (FMCA) and the MMPA. GAO found that fishery and marine mammal managers differ in their interpretations of the two Acts' basic goals. Because jurisdiction to administer the MMPA is divided, the Interior and Commerce are performing similar, if not duplicative, functions. GAO found that the regulatory agencies have not provided priority attention to fulfilling the provisions of the MMPA. It is apparent that there are significant differences of opinion as to the type of action that needs to be taken. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should amend the MMPA to allow the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior, according to the species being managed, to exercise managerial controls over the Native subsistence harvesting of the species, such as the walrus, when it appears such steps will help prevent the species' depletion or assist in protecting the marine environment. Congress should, in connection with the need to establish an appropriate marine mammal enforcement program, amend the MMPA to clarify such terms as subsistence, native handicraft, and wasteful, which are used with limiting or establishing quotas on the harvesting of marine animals by Natives. Congress should amend both the FCMA and the MMPA to clarify the extent to which the interests of each law must be considered in fulfilling the objectives of the other. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior should, in cooperation with State authorities requesting a waiver of the moratorium and a return of management to the States, establish as a high priority, procedures to ensure that the process required to make such determinations is accomplished in an expeditious and responsive manner. Problems that arise with the process should be promptly discussed with appropriate State officials, MMC, and other interested parties to ensure that the time and effort and related costs are kept to a minimum and, more importantly, to help establish an effective marine mammal protection program as the MMPA envisioned. The Secretary of the Interior should require the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service to work more closely with MMC, the State, and others to resolve the

biological and social problems relating to issues, such as optimum sustainable population, the multiple use of coastal resources, and the development of translocation criteria to establish new or separate locations for the sea otter. The Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior should establish interagency working arrangements to expedite the waiver review process when States request a waiver and return of management. In addition, the two agencies should coordinate their enforcement programs and other related activities to reduce costs and minimize delays that may occur as a result of the split Federal jurisdiction inherent in the Federal Government's management of marine mammals. The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to give priority attention, with appropriate direction and level of commitment and funding, to resolving those issues and carrying out those functions, such as establishing recovery teams and developing recovery plans, which facilitate timely development of suitable management programs to encourage and accomplish species recovery. The Secretary of the Interior should insure that the proposed reorganization for marine mammal management provide a sufficiently high level of specific management emphasis to marine mammals and, to the extent possible, eliminate divided responsibilities between the various Fish and Wildlife Service offices.

115202

U.S. Grain Transportation Network Needs System Perspective To Meet Future World Needs. CED-81-59; B-199148. April 8, 1981. Released May 8, 1981. 79 pp. plus 1 appendix (8 pp.). Report to Sen. Max S. Baucus, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Limitations of Contracted and Delegated Authority Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Actions in the Food Processing and Distribution Sectors (1725).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Transportation, Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Limitations of Contracted and Delegated Authority Subcommittee; Sen. Max S. Baucus.

Authority: Hours of Service Act (Railroads) (P.L. 91-169)

Abstract: GAO examined the grain transportation system. It identified actual and potential bottlenecks, explained their significance, and explored the status of activities addressing them. The grain transportation system in the United States is complex and interrelated and involves railroads, waterways, roads, and ports. Changes and events in one area affect all others, straining their ability to perform efficiently. **Findings/Conclusions:** Efforts to improve grain transportation tend to concentrate on individual transportation modes rather than on the transportation network as a whole. An integrated analysis that considers interrelationships between the various components of the grain transportation system has yet to be conducted. An analysis is needed of overall system constraints, interactions, and solutions to prepare for the export industry. Several problems threaten the ability of the grain transportation system to meet future demand: (1) the widely held notion of railcar shortages is symptomatic of a more serious problem, inefficient use of railcars; (2) the proportion of grain moved by truck has increased, (3) waterborne shipments continue to exceed forecasts, and there is widespread concern that the growth of grain exports could be limited by lock and dam constraints, and (4) each major grain exporting port GAO visited was hampered by problems of congestion and inefficiency. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should (1) expand the monitoring of the grain transportation system to identify potential bottlenecks and analyze their impact on the total grain transportation system; and (2) bring together industry, labor, and Government to explore the

best way to alleviate present bottlenecks and forestall future ones. The Secretary of Agriculture should (1) examine the impact of a changing railroad role in grain movement on alternative modes of transportation and export facilities; (2) explore the relationship of grain shipments via the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes and the capability of the Welland Canal to accommodate projected Great Lakes grain shipments and suggest actions that could be taken to improve movement through the canal; and (3) determine the impact of port congestion and inefficiencies on the entire grain transportation system and help involved parties find solutions to improve overall system effectiveness. The Secretary of Agriculture should review the level of resources available for focusing in on the overall transportation system for the purpose of determining what adjustments are warranted.

115266

To Continue or Halt the Tenn-Tom Waterway? Information To Help the Congress Resolve the Controversy. CED-81-89; B-167941. May 15, 1981. Released May 21, 1981. 92 pp. plus 8 appendices (46 pp.).

Report to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Construction, Rehabilitation and Maintenance of Water Resources Projects (2511).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Rep. Joel Pritchard; Rep. Robert W. Edgar; Sen. John C. Stennis; Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan; Sen. William Proxmire; Sen. Charles H. Percy; Sen. Carl M. Levin; Sen. J. Bennett Johnston; Sen. Mark O. Hatfield.

Authority: Regional Development Act of 1975. Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National). Department of Transportation Act (P.L. 89-670). Rivers and Harbors Act (P.L. 79-525). Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.). Federal Highway Act (P.L. 94-280). Executive Order 12113. Engineering Reg. 1120-2-114. H. Rept. 79-486. Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Ry. Co. v. Callaway, 382 F. Supp. 610 (D.C.D.C. 1974). EDF v. Corps of Engineers, 348 F. Supp. 916 (N.D. Miss. 1972).

Abstract: The Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway has had a long, troubled history. Congress authorized the project in 1946, but construction did not start until 1971. The approved project consists of the largest waterway currently under construction by the Corps of Engineers. The navigation portion of the waterway is scheduled for completion in 1986 and the overall project in 1988 with an estimated cost of \$1.96 billion. A 114-mile section of the waterway was opened for limited traffic in 1979. Proponents of the waterway claim that it will benefit the entire Nation by providing a more efficient and economical transportation route from the midcontinent and Eastern United States to the Gulf of Mexico. Opponents claim that the project is not economically and environmentally viable. Two lawsuits to halt construction have been brought against the Government. The court ruled against the plaintiffs in both cases. Ten years after construction started, the waterway is 53 percent complete and expenditures continue at approximately \$20 million a month. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO believes that two major issues remain: (1) whether the approximately \$600 million to be saved by halting the project is worth the almost total loss of the \$1.1 billion invested in the project; and (2) whether Congress, in approving the waterway, is sowing seeds for a future project to eliminate bottlenecks in the adjacent waterway. Neither waterway can reach

Corps traffic projections without improvements. Congress may wish to explore alternative financing. A Corps study of the waterway showed a marginal, but satisfactory, benefit-cost ratio. The estimating practices used in the study may have been too liberal. Since the study was made, coal exports have increased which might increase movements on the waterway. If the waterway is completed, the Corps will have to propose an improvement project to Congress to eliminate traffic constraints caused by physical barriers and limited lock capacity. The Corps' budget estimate is reasonably accurate and includes proper inflation estimates. Land purchases to mitigate the loss of wildlife habitats will be submitted to Congress for approval. Regulations require that local sponsors perform, at their own expense, certain needed tasks and the States involved are expected to complete these tasks before the waterway opens. Operational and maintenance costs would be saved if the project were terminated, but funds would still be needed for such areas as upkeep and fire prevention for the remaining project. Congress should consider the investments which States and localities have made in anticipation of the waterway being completed.

115303

[Budget Reduction Proposals Affecting Federal Compensation Programs]. May 19, 1981. 12 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; by Harry S. Havens, Assistant Comptroller General, GAO Office of the Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the Comptroller General.

Organization Concerned: Office of Personnel Management.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service

Authority: Salary Reform Act of 1962.

Abstract: The Salary Reform Act established the principle that salary rates for Federal white collar employees should be comparable with salaries for the same level of work in private enterprise. Reducing or delaying annual comparability adjustments, along with salary ceilings for Federal executives, have saved the Federal Government at least \$6.9 billion since 1975, but not without a significant accompanying cost in morale. GAO has cited recruitment and retention problems, the creation of an environment where there is little incentive for executives to seek positions of greater authority and responsibility, and the retirement of top officials as soon as they become eligible. A policy which allows for adjusting not only pay but also benefits to achieve total compensation comparability should be developed. GAO supports proposed legislation to provide for a locality pay system for white-collar workers. This would also obviate the need for separate cost-of-living allowances in non-foreign areas. The Office of Personnel Management should be required to take local benefits into account when assessing and adjusting Federal compensation. GAO would oppose a proposal to establish the Federal compensation standard at 94 percent of average non-Federal compensation. GAO supports: the proposed inclusion of State and local governments in the Federal white- and blue-collar pay surveys as an appropriate refinement of the comparability principle; suggested changes in certain features of the blue-collar pay system; a proposal to provide annual cost-of-living adjustments to Federal retirees; and the elimination of a practice which allows Federal employees who are on active training duty with the National Guard or military reserve to receive dual compensation.

115338

[Information on the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's Master Plan Contracting Procedures]. CED-81-106; B-203364. May 27, 1981. 8 pp.

Report to Rep. Tom Bevill, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; Energy and Water Development Subcommittee;

by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effectiveness of Arrangements for Addressing National, Regional, and State Water Resources Problems (2512).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0)

Organization Concerned: Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; *Rep.* Tom Bevill. **Authority:** (P.L. 95-502; 92 Stat. 1693).

Abstract: GAO was requested to provide information concerning contracts awarded by the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission. The contracts involve preparing a comprehensive master plan for the management of the Upper Mississippi River System called for by Public Law 95-502. GAO agreed to provide information on whether: (1) any of the contracts were awarded to groups or individuals who have a conflict of interest; (2) the groups and individuals who were awarded contracts were qualified to perform the work; and (3) the funds have been expended in a manner consistent with the provisions of Public Law 95-502. **Findings/Conclusions:** Several contracts offered an opportunity for conflict of interest, or more properly the potential for bias, which could have influenced the objectivity of the end products. However, in each instance, the opportunity has largely been removed through resignation of the researcher, termination of the contract by the Commission, or the Commission's restructuring of contract terms. The Commission's contract files and documents provided little or no evidence regarding known or potential conflicts of interest. GAO sought out critics of the Commission-awarded study contracts to better understand their concerns. The critics believed that four groups or individuals involved in the master plan activities had conflicts of interest. The groups or individuals who were awarded the contracts and agreements appeared to have the basic qualifications and experience to perform the assigned tasks. However, many had not previously managed or participated in studies containing the scope or complexity of the master plan studies. Based on a cursory review of financial documents, contracts, agreements, and task descriptions, it appears that funds have been expended in a manner generally consistent with the provisions of Public Law 95-502. According to Commission records, about \$8.2 million of the \$8.4 million appropriated for the master plan had been obligated as of March 1981. However, not all requirements of the legislation will be realized.

115342

[Observations on Selected Aspects of School Lunch Program Administration]. May 22, 1981. 3 pp.

Report to William Hoagland, Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service; by Stanley S. Sargol, (for Oliver W. Krueger, Senior Group Director), GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improving Integrity and Effectiveness in Child Nutrition Programs (1723).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Nutrition Service.

Abstract: A limited survey was conducted at three Pennsylvania school districts to obtain background information on selected aspects of school lunch program procedures for obtaining Federal reimbursement for lunches served. **Findings/Conclusions:** All 13 elementary schools in one of the districts used monthly milk consumption records to determine the number of free lunches served

during the month. Using such records could affect the accuracy of the count of free lunches. An envelope system is used to collect the lunch fees from the students, with those receiving a free lunch turning in an empty envelope. This system could be modified to more accurately count the number of free, reduced-price, and full-paid lunches served. Both schools in another school district were destroying meal tickets and daily tally sheets shortly after the meals were served, thereby making reported meal counts difficult to verify. Service regulations generally require that records supporting claims for Federal reimbursement be retained for 3 years. This district also included, as a cost of food used in its school menus, the estimated value of Government-donated commodities. Using these values as a basis for Federal reimbursement is improper since the schools do not pay for the commodities. Salaries of employees who were only partially involved or who were not involved at all were improperly charged to the State Administrative Expense fund. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, should take appropriate measures to resolve the problems caused by (1) use of milk consumption records by the Reading School District to determine the numbers of free lunches served each month; (2) destroying meal tickets and daily tally sheets, showing the number of free, reduced-price, and full-paid meals served, in the Bristol Borough School District; (3) Bristol Borough School District's inclusion, as a cost of food used in its schools menus, of the estimated value of Government commodities; and (4) the charging of total salary costs to the State Administrative Expense (SAE) fund of State employees who were only partially involved or not involved at all in activities properly chargeable to SAE.

115343

River Basin Commissions Have Been Helpful, but Changes Are Needed. CED-81-69; B-196672. May 28, 1981. 27 pp. plus 9 appendices (26 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effectiveness of Arrangements for Addressing National, Regional, and State Water Resources Problems (2512).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Water Resources Council; Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Water Resources Planning Act (P.L. 89-80). P.L. 95-502.

Abstract: River basin planning should match the needs of water users with the amount of water available irrespective of State boundaries or Federal agency responsibilities. A review was made to determine how successful river basin commissions have been in meeting their legislative objectives of planning and coordinating water resource development. **Findings/Conclusions:** The river basin commissions, as they are now operating, do not accomplish optimum planning. While the commissions have provided a forum for Federal and State members to exchange views and have assisted States in various water studies, they have fallen short of meeting some of their legislative objectives. Legislative changes are needed to ensure continued State participation and regional water resources planning input into Federal agencies' budget submissions. Commissions have not become the principal coordinators of water resource projects as intended, and Federal and State members who make up the six river basin commissions do not use their collective authority to carry out commission objectives. Commissions agree that authority is lacking, and Federal and State water plans and programs continue to be prepared independently of commission influence. GAO believes that river basin commissions have the opportunity to be more successful in planning and coordinating

water development. However, changes are needed to: (1) provide broad water resource planning input and ensure continued State participation; and (2) encourage more participation in resolving regional and national water resource problems. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should amend title II of the Water Resources Planning Act to require information regarding priorities established by river basin commissions or other regional planning arrangements be included in the appropriate Federal agencies' annual budget submissions to Congress. Such information should (1) include a comparison of the relative priority of each project with all other water projects within the commission's or other regional arrangement's jurisdiction; and (2) be required before major Federal water projects are authorized. Congress should amend title III of the Water Resources Planning Act to require State membership in river basin commissions or other regional planning arrangements prior to authorization of title III funds.

115373

[Gross and Net Income of Major U.S. Sugar Cane and Beet Producers]. CED-81-113; B-203445. May 29, 1981. 2 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Report to Rep. James M. Shannon; Rep. Frank J. Guarini; Rep. Thomas J. Downey; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Income (1729).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. James M. Shannon; Rep. Frank J. Guarini; Rep. Thomas J. Downey.

Authority: Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Abstract: GAO was asked to report on the gross and net incomes of the Nation's major sugar cane and beet producers from annual public reports and financial statements for 1978, 1979, 1980, and 1981. GAO limited its work to major corporations that are required to file annual reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission and did not attempt to obtain 1981 data because the companies have not yet filed annual financial statements for 1981. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO obtained information on three sugar cane and three sugar beet producers that accounted for approximately 39 percent of the raw value of the U.S. domestic sugar production. All of the companies are diversified by product or process, and therefore the revenues and net income figures do not necessarily represent profitability from the growing and processing of cane or beet sugar. In 1980, the six firms had a revenue of \$4,399,473,000 and a net income of \$233,910,000. In 1979, the six firms had a revenue of \$3,591,300,000 and a net income of \$129,946,000. In 1978, the six firms had a revenue of \$3,176,124,000 and a net income of \$92,239,000.

115407

[Federal Role in Developing Grain Subterminals Should Be Coordinated by USDA]. CED-81-101; B-199148. May 14, 1981. Released June 3, 1981. 10 pp.

Report to Sen. Max S. Baucus; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Actions in the Food Processing and Distribution Sectors (1725).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Transportation.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Max S. Baucus.

Authority: Agricultural Subterminal Facilities of 1980 (P.L. 96-358).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed selected activities on the development of subterminal grain storage facilities. The review was concentrated in States with significant grain production, available information, and the potential for subterminal development and improvement. The GAO objective was to gain an understanding of subterminal development benefits, obstacles, and potential. **Findings/Conclusions:** Farmers have benefited from subterminals in two ways: they receive higher prices for their grain, and they are able to sell more grain when prices rise. Elevators that have become subterminals as a result of the construction of new, larger facilities or the upgrading of existing ones have benefited by significantly increasing their grain volume. The larger volumes reduce handling costs by spreading fixed costs over larger grain volumes. Subterminals generally have lower variable costs than older grain elevators and pay less for transportation due to lower multiple-car and unit-train rates. Railroads have benefited from subterminals by becoming more price competitive with barges and trucks through the cost efficiencies of multiple-car and unit-train shipments, thus softening the decline in the railroads' market share of grain shipment. In addition, the faster turnaround times of multiple-car and unit-train shipments have enabled railroads to haul more grain with the existing fleet of rail cars. The potential exists for further development of subterminals since their operations are more adaptable to high-yield-per-acre crops. They may also be feasible for lower yielding crops-per-acre in certain circumstances. Problems involving subterminals which adversely affect their operations and future development include: failure of some railroads to offer multiple-car and unit-train rates, overdevelopment, and port congestion. Recently enacted legislation authorizes planning grants for developing State and regional subterminal facilities plans and insured construction loans. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should establish in USDA a focal point to oversee Federal subterminal planning and construction activities. Potential borrowers/grantees can then contact such a focal point for obtaining USDA subterminal planning, construction, and improvement funds as well as learn the sources of all other Federal programs that can provide funding for subterminal development. This focal point should be publicized by contacting State departments of transportation and agriculture officials and researchers, State grain and feed dealers associations, and other agricultural associations.

115408

Information on the Resale of Federal Project Water Supplies by Intermediaries. CED-81-102; B-202671. May 27, 1981. Released May 28, 1981. 10 pp.
Report to Rep. George Miller; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effective Water Conservation and Reuse Programs (2504).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers; Department of the Interior: Water and Power Resources Service.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. George Miller.

Authority: H.R. 2606 (97th Cong.). 43 U.S.C. 373. 43 U.S.C. 392a.

Abstract: GAO was requested to provide information for five Water and Power Resources Service and Army Corps of Engineers reservoirs on the following matters: (1) supplemental water deliveries to intermediaries, their resales, and resale profits; (2) requirements that the Resources Service and the Corps be notified of and approve intermediary resales; and (3) the Secretary of the Interior's authority to establish price and profit controls and to require expedited repayments for resales in contracts with intermediaries. GAO selected five reservoirs with actual or potential

water resales which were identified in another GAO review. **Findings/Conclusions:** During the last 5 years, no intermediaries have received supplemental water deliveries. Water has been resold at three reservoirs, at the other two reservoirs, potential water consumers have requested water sales contracts. The intermediaries resold the water at amounts substantially higher than their payments to the Federal project for the water supply. Although the Resources Service contracts require that the contracting officer be notified of and approve intermediary water resales agreements, these requirements were not included for water resales in the Corps of Engineers contract; however, the Corps of Engineers was notified of the resale. The Corps of Engineers contract does not require notification of and approval for the sale of reservoir storage space. The Secretary of the Interior has the general authority for new or amended contracts and, under certain circumstances for existing contracts, to establish price or profit controls over intermediaries' water resales as well as to require expedited repayment. GAO believes that the Secretary has broad authority to limit the prices charged by intermediaries for resale of water from Federal projects. Also, the Secretary could, in appropriate cases, require that amounts received by intermediaries in excess of their costs and administrative expenses be paid into the reclamation fund. If it is desired to limit the Secretary's discretionary powers under his general authority and to ensure that third parties do not pay exorbitant prices for Federal water purchased from an intermediary, then legislation would need to be enacted.

115447

Congressional Action Needed To Provide a Better Focus on Water-Related Research. CED-81-87; B-202557. June 5, 1981. 38 pp plus 10 appendices (41 pp.)

Report to Congress; by John D. Heller, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs (2500).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers; Department of Commerce; Department of Agriculture; Water Resources Council; Office of Science and Technology Policy

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Public Works and Transportation: Water Resources Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Water Resources Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Water Resources Research Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-379). Water Research and Development Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-467). P.L. 94-587.

Abstract: The Nation faces serious water problems in the West and certain other areas of the country. Developing and implementing technologies that conserve or augment water supplies could help alleviate these problems. These efforts and other water-related research and development activities are fragmented among 28 Federal organizations that plan to spend about \$380 million during fiscal year 1981. **Findings/Conclusions:** A comparative assessment of conservation and augmentation technologies is needed to establish water research priorities and allocate the research funds. GAO found considerable disagreement as to which technologies have the most potential for solving water supply and quality problems. There appears to be no correlation between the potential of some technologies and their relative level of Federal funding. Before assessing the various technologies, regional and local water problems and potential alternative solutions should be identified. The comparative assessment should also identify and evaluate the impact of technical, environmental, legal, and social obstacles on

each technology's potential. Formal plans should be developed based on the results of the comparative assessment. GAO found that some agencies had not prepared formal plans, others had prepared plans that lacked many elements, plans did not provide for periodic independent evaluations, and many plans lacked specific, measurable objectives and estimated completion dates. GAO examined the advantages and disadvantages of various organizations having the responsibility for coordinating water research. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should amend section 406 of the Water Research and Development Act of 1978 to require the Water Resources Council (WRC) to coordinate water-related research provided Congress believes it desirable to have an independent, full-time WRC chairperson and resolves the issue of continued existence of WRC. Otherwise, Congress should amend section 406 to establish a water resources research committee reporting directly to the Office of Science and Technology Policy. This committee should be composed of representatives from the major Federal organizations involved in water resources research. Congress should amend section 406 of the Water Research and Development Act to require the Federal organization Congress chooses to coordinate research to (1) establish priorities for water conservation and augmentation technologies based upon the results of overall comparative assessments of these technologies; (2) provide leadership and guidance to other agencies in developing formal multi-agency and single-agency plans for the technologies with specific objectives, milestones, technology transfer goals, and provisions for independent, periodic evaluations; (3) make recommendations annually to Congress concerning the adequacy of the funding levels of water research, development, and technology transfer activities; (4) consider the data developed pursuant to section 103 of the act in coordinating research and establishing research priorities.

115467

Millions Can Be Saved by Improving the Productivity of State and Local Governments Administering Federal Income Maintenance Assistance Programs. AFMD-81-51, B-202884. June 5, 1981. 42 pp plus 5 appendices (27 pp.).
Report to Congress, by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services. Payment Processes (1309), National Productivity. Restructuring the Federal Grants Systems To Enhance Its Impact on Productivity (2908)

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Unemployment Compensation (603.0); Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0); General Government: Executive Direction and Management (802.0); General Government: Other General Government (806.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Labor; Office of Management and Budget; Department of Agriculture; Office of Personnel Management.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Social Security Act. Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970. Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act (P.L. 95-224). Food Stamp Act of 1977. P.L. 96-249.

Abstract: GAO reviewed three State-administered Federal income maintenance programs whose administrative costs are fully paid or shared by the Federal Government: the Unemployment Insurance (UI), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and Food Stamp programs. The objective of the review was to demonstrate that many opportunities exist for improving productivity in State and local management of Federal income maintenance programs and that these improvements can reduce costs and improve efficiency and enhance program effectiveness. In addition, changes needed in these Federal assistance programs to promote productivity

improvement were identified. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO identified potential savings of millions of dollars associated with the use of inefficient procedures by State and local governments administering these programs. Federal methods for allocating and distributing funds in the income maintenance assistance programs reviewed neither reward nor encourage productivity improvements. Instead, these systems serve primarily as mechanisms for justifying how limited resources are allocated to the States with little, if any, regard as to how efficiently these resources are used. Neither the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) nor the Department of Agriculture has implemented approaches to help States determine staff needs or control administrative spending in the AFDC and Food Stamp programs. The Department of Labor has established the Cost Model Management System in an effort to make UI program administration more efficient, control administrative costs, and provide technical assistance to the States. Although conceptually sound, poor management, weak budget controls, and a lack of incentives undermine the system, causing it to fall far short of its goals. Few Federal assistance programs have systems to measure and improve productivity. Moreover, the Federal assistance system generally provides no incentive to States or their employees to improve productivity. The Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management are taking the lead in efforts to better coordinate Federal assistance policies and to improve private sector productivity. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Director of the Office of Management and Budget should require, where appropriate through the budget process, that Federal agencies develop systematic approaches to help State and local governments improve their productivity in administering Federal assistance programs and that agencies use the data generated by these systems to justify future budget requests. The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Agriculture should develop and implement systematic approaches to measure, analyze, and improve the productivity of State and local governments administering the Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Food Stamp programs. The Secretaries of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture should work with States, through technical assistance programs, to eliminate inefficient procedures and identify other opportunities for improving the productivity in administering these programs. The Secretary of Labor should take actions necessary to correct deficiencies in the Cost Model Management System and to refine the system as a productivity improvement program. Corrective actions needed include (1) improving control over both the cost model studies and operational and cost improvement projects and (2) using the system in the budget process. The Secretaries of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture should report to the Office of Management and Budget on successful incentive systems for State and local governments so that effective incentives can be shared and transferred to other assistance programs. The Secretaries of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture should seek authority from Congress to develop and fund demonstration projects testing approaches for providing States incentives for making productivity improvements in the Unemployment Insurance, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and Food Stamp programs. The Director of the Office of Personnel Management should work with Federal agencies, overseeing assistance programs that are administered by State and local governments, to improve and monitor those agencies' technical assistance efforts in productivity improvement. The Director of the Office of Personnel Management should place priority on efforts to assist State and local governments develop measurement and incentive programs for individuals and managers to improve their administration of Federal assistance programs. The Director of the Office of Management and Budget should develop, with the assistance and support of the Office of Personnel Management, an interagency program to explore the potential for establishing incentive systems in Federal assistance programs for State and local governments. Participants in this effort should include representatives from State and local governments and appropriate public interest

groups The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Agriculture should use the data generated by those systems to allocate administrative funds to States

115548

More Can Be Done To Protect Depositors at Federally Examined Grain Warehouses. CED-81-112, B-202986 June 19, 1981 32 pp plus 4 appendices (10 pp)

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Income (1729).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Commodity Credit Corp ; Agricultural Marketing Service; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Authority: Warehouse Act (7 U.S.C. 241 et seq.). Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978 S. 1365 (97th Cong.). H.R. 2523 (97th Cong.). H.R. 2926 (97th Cong.). H.R. 2593 (97th Cong.). H.R. 2582 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: The Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers a voluntary licensing and examination program under the Warehouse Act. In addition, USDA sets requirements for and examines contract warehouses storing commodities owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) or pledged to CCC as loan collateral. GAO reviewed the USDA grain warehouse examination programs. To avoid duplication of other ongoing studies, GAO limited the examination to the magnitude of the bankruptcy problem to date, the number of warehouses in financial difficulty, ways the current Federal programs could be strengthened, and issues that should be considered in evaluating certain possible program and legislative changes. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that about 2 percent of the Nation's approximately 10,000 grain warehouses went bankrupt over the past 7 years. Financial formulas for predicting bankruptcies in certain industries have been developed and tested successfully. The GAO self-developed criteria, although not designed to measure future bankruptcies, indicated that a significant number of grain warehouses may be in financial difficulty; an estimated 300 warehouses subject to Federal examination. While this estimate does not mean 300 bankruptcies are likely in the near future, it is a cause for concern in light of the much lower rate of bankruptcies to date. Federal warehouse examinations are designed to protect depositors primarily by ensuring that a warehouse has enough grain of the proper quality to meet all storage obligations. The two weaknesses that hamper efforts to accurately determine these obligations are (1) the practice of not issuing warehouse receipts for all storage grain; and (2) the lack of control over printing and distribution of warehouse receipts in certain States. Since many States do not control the printing and distribution of receipts, examiners cannot be sure that they have accounted for all receipts when examining nonfederally licensed CCC contract warehouses in those States. USDA requires operators to submit certain financial data at least annually but does not require certified statements. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service to require federally examined warehouses to submit the financial data necessary to compute commonly used ratios indicative of financial health. The Administrator should then require Agricultural Marketing Service personnel to compute and determine the trend of these ratios as part of their routine financial reviews. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service to require that it value fixed assets according to generally accepted accounting principles--cost less accumulated depreciation on depreciable assets. Warehouse operators should then be required to follow generally accepted accounting principles

in filling out financial data forms submitted to the Agricultural Marketing Service. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service to require that grain storage obligations reflected on warehouse customer account records be verified with a statistical sample of depositors as part of normal subsequent examination procedures employed at federally licensed and CCC contract grain warehouses. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to ensure that all Commodity Credit Corporation contract grain warehouses use warehouse receipts that can be accounted for during Federal warehouse examinations. Ways of doing this include: (1) encouraging States with insufficient controls over the printing and distribution of warehouse receipts to upgrade their requirements; and (2) requiring adequate controls as a prerequisite for obtaining a storage contract. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrators of the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to require that all federally licensed and the Commodity Credit Corporation contract grain warehouses give depositors warehouse receipts for all storage grain as soon as is practicable after delivery is completed. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service to require that it provide warehouse operators with specific written instructions on how to complete required financial forms. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service to develop and implement a predictive formula for grain warehouse bankruptcies. This formula would be useful in determining the magnitude of the potential bankruptcy problem and in establishing priorities and frequencies for Federal examinations. It should be developed before USDA decides what actions to take on threatened insolvencies

115599

Food for Development Program Constrained by Unresolved Management and Policy Questions. ID-81-32; B-203073. June 23, 1981. 30 pp. plus 6 appendices (20 pp).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630), Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Promote International Food and Agriculture Development Assistance (1730).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of Agriculture; Office of Management and Budget; Department of State.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480; 7 U.S.C. 1691 et seq.).

Abstract: The implementation of the 1977 Food for Development amendment to the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act was reviewed. This is the principal legislation under which the United States provides food aid to friendly countries. The review was conducted because of the emphasis in recent years on more closely relating U.S. food aid with recipient country self-help efforts and because of some congressional concerns that the food for development program had not been implemented more rapidly and on a larger scale. **Findings/Conclusions:** There is a need to fix responsibility and authority for the design, review, approval, and evaluation of the multiyear development plans under the Act with one lead agency, preferably the Agency for International Development. This lead agency could draw upon the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other outside technical expertise in dealing with development planning and implementation. U.S.

polymakers face the dilemma of persuading recipient governments to take difficult self-help measures in return for U.S. food aid, which they may perceive that they will get anyway. Agencies also face the problem of getting maximum impact of food aid on development under the Act with its stringent requirements in an environment of highly concessional alternative food aid. A policy framework for linking the concessionality of food assistance to self-help measures needs to be established. Such a policy, if it is to be meaningful, will require close cooperation among the concerned departments and agencies and will require appropriate consultation with congressional committees. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of AID, drawing upon USDA and other technical expertise, should develop specific country food and agriculture analyses to serve as the foundation for program planning, not only for title III but for the larger issues of integrating U.S. food assistance with other U.S. assistance programs and those of other donors. The Secretary of Agriculture, in the Department's role as Chair of the Development Coordination Committee Subcommittee on Food Aid, should establish or refine as necessary, standards (1) tailoring the terms and self-help measures of food aid to the purposes for which such assistance is provided and to the needs of recipient countries, and (2) basing the concessionality of future assistance on the degree of recipient countries' self-help performance. The Administrator of AID, drawing upon USDA and other technical expertise, should provide technical assistance, when requested, to U.S. missions and recipient governments in the preparation of specific title III proposals and in the evaluation of progress made under specific title III agreements. The Administrator of AID, drawing upon USDA and other technical expertise, should prepare the detailed guidance to U.S. overseas missions for the preparation of specific title III proposals.

115608

Weak Management in Animal Disease Control Program Results in Large Economic Losses. CED-81-96; B-203585. June 24, 1981. 34 pp. plus 7 appendices (15 pp.)

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Adaptability of the Food Production System To Maintain Productivity Under Changed Conditions (1728)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: Veterinary Services.

Abstract: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is responsible for conducting regulatory and control programs to protect and improve the Nation's animal and plant resources. The Service has two basic units: Veterinary Services, and Plant Protection and Quarantine. GAO reviewed the Veterinary Service's Brucellosis Eradication Program to determine whether improvements could be made. **Findings/Conclusions:** Progress in the Brucellosis Eradication Program has been impeded because several disease control measures have not been implemented effectively. Some animals sold at livestock markets and identified as infected could not be traced to their herds of origin because of inadequate control over the collection of ownership information and the identification tagging of animals. Herds were not always tested in time to assure that infection was expeditiously identified. Controls were not always used to make sure that all animals in quarantined herds were accounted for from test to test so that any infection was identified as quickly as possible. Field personnel had not always followed procedures to locate herds exposed to disease by cattle purchased from herds subsequently found to be infected. While field personnel often attributed

these operational shortcomings to lack of industry cooperation or personnel shortages, GAO found that weaknesses in the management systems were a primary cause of ineffective implementation of disease control measures. The management systems do not provide assurance that field personnel and each organizational unit know what is expected of them in implementing these measures, nor do they provide guidance for measuring performance regarding these expectations. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to develop instructions covering the operations necessary to assure that disease control measures are properly implemented and, in conjunction with cooperating State agencies, provide the instructions to all field personnel. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to resubmit the USDA draft bill authorizing civil penalties and, if it is enacted: (1) establish heavier penalties for those who repeatedly circumvent disease control regulations; and (2) assure that penalties exceed the cost of complying with laws and regulations. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to strengthen enforcement activities by (1) creating a separate line function for compliance personnel, (2) requiring closer coordination of field investigations; and (3) forming a cadre of personnel with the necessary training and experience to effectively pursue cases of improper health certifications by private veterinarians. The Secretary of Agriculture should revise the Brucellosis Eradication Uniform Methods and Rules to include dealer recordkeeping provisions as a consideration in certifying a State's disease status. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to collect and analyze information regarding the effects of extending the test period to include the recognized incubation period, including (1) any increase in the number of infected animals identified, and (2) any increase in cost to herd owners. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to formulate cooperative agreements which clearly show lines of authority and responsibility for program functions at each organizational level for both State and Veterinary Services personnel. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to modify the automated data system so that it can provide summary and exception information reflecting the degree to which disease control measures are properly implemented by each organizational unit and install the automated data system in States having a high incidence of animal disease. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to establish goals that emphasize improved implementation of disease control measures.

115610

[Followup on the National Marine Fisheries Service's Efforts To Assess the Quality of U.S.-Produced Seafood]. CED-81-125; B-200759. June 22, 1981. 10 pp.

Report to Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary, Department of Commerce; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921); Health Programs: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1251); Food: Adequacy of Federal Food Quality Assurance Efforts (1721)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0); Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1); Commerce and Housing Credit: Federal Financing Bank (374.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: National Marine Fisheries Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Authority: Saltonstall-Kennedy Act (15 U.S.C. 713c-3).

Abstract: In a prior report, GAO stated that a comprehensive assessment is needed of the quality of seafood produced by U.S. processors for domestic and foreign consumption. GAO pointed out several examples of foreign complaints about U.S. exports and noted that consumer and industry publications have been critical of the quality of U.S. seafood products. Since the earlier report was issued, GAO has collected additional information on the quality of U.S. seafood products that further demonstrates the importance of the recommended study. **Findings/Conclusions:** Variable quality, as well as prices, marketing techniques, and other factors inhibit the demand for U.S. seafood products in foreign markets. However, evidence is not readily available to demonstrate conclusively the specific extent and degree that variable quality impedes U.S. exports. Additionally, the National Marine Fisheries Service's voluntary inspection and certification program does not assure importers that U.S. products will meet or satisfy their quality requirements primarily because inspectors are not familiar with or trained in foreign quality standards. The quality of U.S. exports, as well as domestic products, can be improved by better onboard seafood handling techniques. Incentives, such as price differentials, to fishermen for higher quality products could help in achieving needed improvements. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to initiate a comprehensive study to assess the quality of U.S. seafood produced for domestic and foreign consumption. Because budget reductions and higher priority projects for Saltonstall-Kennedy funds have prevented the needed evaluation, the Secretary of Commerce should review other options to support the evaluation. The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a program to train inspectors with a particular emphasis on informing them of foreign seafood quality regulations and requirements. The Secretary of Commerce should work cooperatively with the fishing industry, including fishermen, wholesalers, processors, and retailers, to establish the feasibility of a dockside grading program together with a system of price differentials for high quality products.

115688

Farmer-Owned Grain Reserve Program Needs Modification To Improve Effectiveness. CED-81-70; B-203170. June 26, 1981. 227 pp. plus 3 appendices (14 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Consists of three volumes which can be ordered separately by Accession Number. Volume 1: Report (Accession Number 800001); Volume 2: "Consequences of USDA's Farmer-Owned Reserve Program for Grain Stocks and Prices," authored by Dr. Bruce Gardner (Accession Number 800002); Volume 3: "Theoretical and Empirical Considerations in Agricultural Buffer Stock Policy Under the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977," authored by Dr. Richard E. Just (Accession Number 800003).

Issue Area: Food: Federal Government Food Production System (1711); Food: Adaptability of the Food Production System To Maintain Productivity Under Changed Conditions (1728).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113; 91 Stat. 913). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Grain

Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 71 et seq.).

Abstract: The farmer-owned grain reserve, authorized by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, is to encourage producers to store wheat and feed grains when they are in abundant supply and extend the time for their orderly marketing. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO and its consultants found that, during its first 2 to 3 years, the farmer-owned reserve (FOR) only partially met its objectives of increasing grain inventories in times of abundant supply, removing the Government from the role of grain storer and reducing price variability. Some reserve grain is of questionable quality, and storage payments have exceeded storage costs. As of March 18, 1981, the reserve contained about 1.22 billion bushels of wheat, corn, and other grains. The value of outstanding loans on these reserve grains was about \$2.9 billion. The reserve grain cannot be sold without penalty until predetermined market price levels are reached. At release, producers may, but do not have to, remove the grain from the reserve. At call, producers must repay their loans or forfeit the grain. Most reserve grain would have been held in private stocks without the reserve. Although the reserve initially succeeded in ensuring producer ownership of reserve stocks, the Government now holds grain purchased in reaction to the Russian grain embargo. Program modifications are needed to improve the program's effectiveness. Producers had been allowed to retain unearned storage payments for an unreasonable period of time when the redemption period was extended. Program regulations have been amended to provide that interest be charged immediately following the maturity date or the originally required settlement date.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should provide for methodical program adjustments in response to a broad range of potential market and political developments to allow decisionmakers in grain and related industries to anticipate such changes and adjustments, while still allowing for some flexibility. The Secretary of Agriculture should determine the average cost of FOR grain storage and limit producer storage payments to this amount. In determining the average cost of FOR grain storage, both on farm and warehouse storage costs should be considered. The Secretary of Agriculture should amend program regulations to make them consistent with Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service procedures which provide that storage earnings stop in all cases when a grain reaches call status. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the to improve its guidelines and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service procedures for identifying grain with quality problems serving as loan collateral and correcting or eliminating quality problems identified. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to obtain official grade determinations, on a sample basis, as grain enters the farmer-owned reserve and on the same grain each subsequent year (where possible), to develop a profile of FOR grain and determine what characteristics are predictors of storability. The Secretary of Agriculture should study the feasibility of other farmer-owned reserve program modifications and, if they provide remedies to the problems that were found, incorporate them into the program. The Secretary of Agriculture should evaluate the effectiveness of the farmer-owned reserve to serve as a basis for Congress to use in making future grain policy decisions.

115713

Audit of the United States Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund--September 30, 1979, to September 27, 1980. AFMD-81-63; B-114871. July 7, 1981. 2 pp. plus 5 enclosures (9 pp.).

Report to George M. White, Architect of the Capitol; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting: Operations, Financial Position, and Changes in Financial Position (2802).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Legislative Functions (801.0).

Organization Concerned: Architect of the Capitol.
Authority: 40 U.S.C. 174j-5.

Abstract: GAO examined the balance sheet of the U.S. Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund as of September 27, 1980, and September 29, 1979, and the related statements of operations and changes in financial position for the years then ended. The Senate restaurants are operated primarily for Senators and employees of the Senate. The Architect of the Capitol is responsible for managing the restaurants. Receipts from sales, commissions, and transfers from the appropriations for the contingent expenses of the Senate are used to finance the activities of the Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund. **Findings/Conclusions:** For the period ended September 27, 1980, sales receipts and commissions amounted to \$4,253,211. There was no transfer from the appropriation for contingent expenses of the Senate during the year. Senate restaurants operations for the period ended September 27, 1980, resulted in a net operating profit of \$21,428 compared with a net operating loss for the preceding period of \$79,424. The change from a loss in fiscal 1979 to a profit in fiscal 1980 can be attributed primarily to a decrease in losses on cafeteria food operations, an increase in the profit on fast food and cigar-stand operations, and an increase in vending machine commissions. In the opinion of GAO, the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund as of September 27, 1980, and September 29, 1979, and the results of its operations and changes in financial position for the years then ended.

115724

[Protest of Award of Food Service Concession Contract]. B-202246. July 2, 1981. 3 pp.
Decision re. Jets Services, Inc.; by Harry R. Van Cleve, Acting General Counsel

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: National Aeronautics and Space Administration. John F. Kennedy Space Center, FL; Jets Services, Inc., Canteen of Florida, Inc

Authority: B-184911 (1976). B-185174 (1976) B-201850 (1981). B-201882 (1981). 31 U.S.C. 71. 31 U.S.C. 74.

Abstract: A firm protested the award of a food service concession contract pursuant to a request for proposals issued by the Kennedy Space Center. According to the concession agreement, the concessioner would operate, with its own funds, a general cafeteria business for the Kennedy Space Center employees and installation visitors. The agency contended that GAO should not consider the protest because no expenditure of the agency's appropriated funds was involved. The protester believed that, since that agency was a party to the contract and appropriated funds would be expended for substantial amounts of Government equipment, facilities, supplies, and services to be furnished to the contractor for use in performing the contract, the contract involved appropriated funds. Therefore, it contended that GAO should review the protest. A review of the proposed contract disclosed that the any awardee would receive the Government equipment and that these items would be utilized by the concessioner as part of the Government's contract administration functions. Any excess profits remaining at the end of the contract term would revert to the Government. In the absence of payments out of appropriated funds, GAO does not review contract awards even if the procuring party is an instrumentality of the United States. Thus, GAO declined to review the protest, and it was dismissed.

115741

More Can Be Done To Improve the Department of Agriculture's Commodity Donation Program. CED-81-83; B-202958. July 9, 1981. 70 pp. plus 4 appendices (31 pp.).

Report to Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Sen. Thad Cochran, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Federal Domestic Food Assistance Programs (1710); Food: Federal Government Food Production System (1711); Food: Improvement of the Food Marketing and Distribution Process (1716)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Food and Nutrition Service; Food Safety and Quality Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Agricultural Marketing Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Education and Labor; House Committee on Appropriations, Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton; Sen. Thad Cochran

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1431). School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1755) 7 C.F.R. 210. 7 C.F.R. 250.2 7 C.F.R. 250.4(h) P.L. 95-166. P.L. 96-528. Food and Nutrition Service Handbook 501 7 U.S.C. 612c. 42 U.S.C. 1762a.

Abstract: In fiscal year 1980, State and local programs to feed students, the elderly, needy families, and others received over \$900 million worth of food through the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) commodity donation program. About 90 percent of the donated food was for the school lunch program administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Two other USDA agencies provide the commodities. **Findings/Conclusions:** USDA has not fully and accurately determined users' commodity needs, and States order commodities without determining user needs or preferences. GAO recognizes the difficulty of balancing the program objective of purchasing commodities for surplus removal and price support with the objective of purchasing commodities that user agencies prefer and need. However, GAO believes that improvements can be made. At times, commodities are received too late for use or without advance notice. Occasionally, recipients have to purchase food items locally which they would normally receive through the program. USDA allows States to restrict the mode of transportation to truck or rail, which can result in excessive transportation charges. The Department should consider increased use of the free-on-board (FOB) destination basis for procurement. It has been suggested that the commodity donation program be replaced with a cash or letter-of-credit voucher system. This would allow recipient agencies to purchase desired food items locally using cash or credit vouchers provided by the Department. Opponents fear a possible increase in opportunities for fraud and abuse, an increase in program costs, and a lessening of market surplus response capability. GAO believes that testing should provide Congress with needed data on the pros and cons of the alternative systems. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should (1) revise USDA procedures to require that shippers provide specific written documentation regarding their inability to supply needed transportation and dates when the vendor requested transportation; (2) emphasize to the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service the need to completely review vendor appeal cases and to sufficiently document its actions, (3) monitor FNS regional office efforts in getting States to adopt greater flexibility in the way they take delivery on commodities and, if necessary, require States to annually update their delivery capabilities; and (4) monitor the FOB-destination procurement of fruits and vegetables for the needy family program and, where cost-justified, expand such procurement of fruits and vegetables to other programs

receiving donated commodities. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food and Nutrition Service to require that States develop procedures for distributing commodities to recipient agencies based on reported needs rather than allocating commodities based on the number of meals served. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food and Nutrition Service to fully evaluate commodity inventory levels at the State distributing agencies by developing a monitoring plan that: (1) requires States to continue to report commodity inventory levels as well as inventory levels in State-owned or -leased storage facilities, and to report inventory levels by program; (2) identifies the monitoring responsibilities of FNS headquarters and its regional offices; (3) specifies how those involved in monitoring should analyze the State inventory data and establishes reasonable timeframes for completing the analyses; and (4) specifies actions to be taken when FNS identifies problems with untimely, inaccurate, or incomplete reporting, excessive inventories, or lack of adequate inventory controls. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food and Nutrition Service to develop a monitoring plan to be followed by State distributing agencies in monitoring commodity inventory levels at recipient agencies. The plan should require that, at a minimum, the State agencies: (1) analyze monthly inventory reports submitted by the recipient agencies to identify excess and/or low inventory levels, poor inventory controls, and ineffective use of commodities; (2) identify causes of the problems, recommend positive action to alleviate them, and follow up to determine that corrective action is taken; and (3) visit a specified number of recipient agencies each year to take a physical inventory and review inventory control procedures. The Secretary of Agriculture should require that all recipient agencies maintain perpetual book inventories; take periodic physical inventories and submit the results to the State along with copies of the source documents used; explain any differences between physical inventory counts and perpetual inventory balances; and develop and report monthly to State distributing agencies data showing, at a minimum, (1) beginning inventory, (2) commodities received during the month, (3) commodities used during the month, (4) ending inventory, and (5) the value of commodities used per meal prepared. The Secretary of Agriculture should revise appropriate program regulations to require the Food and Nutrition Service to develop a formal monitoring system setting forth data to be maintained by State distributing and recipient agencies, how the data should be analyzed, and who is responsible for the analyses. The Secretary of Agriculture should require State distributing agencies to order commodities for recipient agencies based on demonstrated use and need rather than judgment and personal opinion. The Secretary of Agriculture should specifically show in the annual purchase plan how user needs and preferences affect the amount of funds that may be spent on commodity purchases. Analyses should be included showing the weights given such factors as commodity availability, market prices, and fund availability. The Secretary of Agriculture should establish specific procedures and a required reporting format to ensure that school districts' views on commodity preferences and needs are fully, accurately, and uniformly reflected in reports sent to State educational agencies by the State food distribution advisory councils. The Secretary of Agriculture should evaluate the potential and actual effects of the USDA section 32 commodity purchases on the market prices and quantities available.

115786

Analysis of Certain Aspects of the California-Arizona Navel Orange Marketing Order. CED-81-129; B-203812. July 2, 1981. Released July 10, 1981. 3 pp. plus 1 appendix (19 pp.). Report to Rep. George Miller; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Adaptability of the Food Production System To Maintain Productivity Under Changed Conditions (1728).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.
Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).
Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Navel Orange Administrative Committee, Agricultural Marketing Service.
Congressional Relevance: Rep. George Miller.
Authority: Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 601) Agricultural Adjustment Act. 7 C.F.R. 907.20, 7 C.F.R. 907.22. F.P.M. ch. 735.

Abstract: GAO reviewed certain aspects of the California-Arizona navel orange marketing order and provided background information on marketing orders in general and more specifically on the navel orange marketing order. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) the Navel Orange Administrative Committee's composition, which is established in Federal regulations, only assures adequate consideration of navel orange industry interests because it consists primarily of industry members; (2) about 83,000 tons of oranges were sold as cattle feed this year; (3) there was no evidence that fruit was dumped or otherwise destroyed; (4) 1980-81 orange prices may have been lower without the marketing order, but the long-range implications of marketing order termination are unknown; (5) many of the oranges fed to cattle came from groves receiving Federal water but it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to determine exactly how much; (6) the composition of the marketing order Committee does not violate Federal conflict-of-interest laws; (7) the Navel Orange Administrative Committee does not have the authority to advertise oranges generically, but growers who favor generic advertising are seeking ways of doing so outside of the Committee, (8) handlers who have spoken out against the marketing order have not been audited more frequently than others; and (9) two growers have received extra compensation for serving on the Committee, but this practice has ceased because the Department of Agriculture said it was unacceptable and would result in removal of the growers from the Committee.

115810

[Nutrition Research Peer Review at the National Institutes of Health]. HRD-81-95; B-203244. June 1, 1981. Released July 2, 1981. 2 pp. plus 4 enclosures (19 pp.).

Report to Rep. Frederick W. Richmond, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Gregory J. Ahart, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Health Programs: Health Research Keeping Pace With the Changes in Disease Patterns (1219).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Health Research (552.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; National Institutes of Health.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Frederick W. Richmond.

Abstract: A study was conducted to determine whether the peer review system at the National Institutes of Health (NIH): (1) provided adequate peer review of applied research proposals and research proposals using innovative approaches; (2) used qualified individuals to review nutrition-related proposals; (3) funded nutrition-related grant proposals less frequently than other grant proposals; (4) funded researchers with prior NIH support more readily than previously unsupported researchers; and (5) favored researchers from institutions with substantial prior support from NIH. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that all grant proposals submitted to NIH were peer reviewed in a similar manner whether the proposals were for basic or applied research or were considered to be innovative or non-innovative research approaches. The curricula vitae of individuals serving in the peer review system for nutrition research grant proposals indicated that they were qualified to review such proposals. Data on the type of research funded, prior

NIH research support, and the total funding level of institutions employing NIH grant recipients show that differences exist in the percentage of grants awarded to researchers in various categories. However, these data do not lead GAO to conclude that there has been a bias toward any category of researcher or institution.

115839

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation: Its Role in Development and Trade. ID-81-21; B-199973. February 27, 1981. Released March 6, 1981. 64 pp. plus 3 appendices (13 pp.).

Report to Sen. Charles H. Percy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Participation of the U.S. Private Sector in the Development Process (0635)

Contact: International Division

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Overseas Private Investment Corp.; Agency for International Development, Department of Labor; Department of State; Department of Commerce; International Development Cooperation Agency

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Sen. Charles H. Percy; Sen. Frank Church

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Foreign Assistance Act of 1969. Government Corporation Control Act (31 U.S.C. 841 et seq.).

Abstract: The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) was created to mobilize and facilitate the participation of U.S. private capital and skills in the economic and social development of less developed friendly countries. GAO was asked to review OPIC to determine the developmental impact of OPIC-supported investments, the effects of these investments on the U.S. economy, and the participation of small U.S. businesses in OPIC programs. **Findings/Conclusions:** OPIC has made progress in diversifying its finance and insurance portfolios toward the poorer developing countries and has adopted project screening criteria consistent with congressional guidelines. However, OPIC has only limited opportunities to enhance the developmental aspects of individual investment projects or to be particularly selective in choosing investments to support. For the poorer countries and for small business investors, the availability of OPIC services has some importance in the decisions of potential investors. GAO believes that a restriction on OPIC activities in countries having per capita incomes above \$1,000 could be removed. The kinds of investments likely to spur U.S. exports and the possible conflicts that might arise between country development interests and U.S. export interests need to be more fully explored. OPIC needs to examine each investment proposal thoroughly for trade effects and possible development conflicts. GAO did not find a direct relationship between overseas investment and subsequent U.S. job losses but found clear inadequacies in aspects of the OPIC screening and monitoring processes. Large U.S. firms remain the major users of OPIC as small businesses generally lack the resources and expertise to establish ventures overseas and to remain for long periods. OPIC could increase small business participation through closer collaboration with embassy and Agency for International Development (AID) officials and by providing more advantageous insurance rates for small businesses. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The President of OPIC, in consultation with the Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA), should undertake, in conjunction with the primary U.S. export-oriented agencies, a concerted effort to further identify the specific areas and means by which U.S. foreign investments can significantly stimulate U.S. exports. They should also improve OPIC project selectivity, by requiring that more consideration be given in the OPIC analysis of proposed "trade exception" cases to: (1) strengthening its procurement requirements to include production inputs as well as initial procurement; (2)

comparing U.S. with other industrialized nation trade benefits from U.S. foreign investments; and (3) examining long-term effects of possible technology transfers. The President of OPIC and the Director of IDCA should establish a more active role for AID in screening trade exception cases for possible conflicts with development objectives and devising guidelines and criteria for analyzing these cases. The Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency and the President of OPIC should develop and implement policy guidelines and a system of closer coordination with the Departments of State and Commerce to: (1) identify in the poorer developing countries more development-oriented and financially attractive investment opportunities; (2) help resolve problems encountered by U.S. businesses in the investment process; and (3) assist interested developing countries to improve their foreign investment screening and approval processes, priorities, and promotion efforts. The President of OPIC, in consultation with the Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency, should require the OPIC staff to: (1) consult with appropriate Labor Department and labor union officials, as well as a wide range of industry experts, when assessing import-sensitive industry project proposals; and (2) develop specific operational guidelines for approving projects in all import-sensitive industries. The President of OPIC, in consultation with the Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency, should fully implement the new system for evaluating and following up on OPIC small business promotion efforts, particularly the investor-mission and feasibility-study programs.

115840

[Information on Dine-Out Feature of the Food Stamp Program]. CED-81-72, B-202269. February 27, 1981. Released March 11, 1981. 7 pp. plus 1 enclosure (14 pp.).

Report to Sen. Mark Andrews, Rep. John T. Myers, Rep. J. Kenneth Robinson; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Programs for the Elderly (1311); Food: How Can the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program Be Improved (1722)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance. Rep. John T. Myers; Rep. J. Kenneth Robinson; Sen. Mark Andrews.

Authority: Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973. Older Americans Act of 1965.

Abstract: The dine-out feature of the Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Program allows food stamp recipients who are at least 60 years of age to use food coupons to pay for meals in authorized restaurants. **Findings/Conclusions:** The number of States and restaurants participating in the dine-out feature has decreased. Six of the nine States that dropped the feature did so because of the low participation by eligible food stamp recipients. A major factor bearing on the participation level may be that food stamp recipients cannot afford to spend their food coupons for restaurant meals. The limited data available suggest that any major future growth in the dine-out feature is unlikely. Administrative cost data on the dine-out feature were not available; however, estimates indicate that costs are low in actual dollars but high in proportion to restaurant coupon redemptions. GAO believes that the dine-out feature's socialization goal may be better served through the Department of Health and Human Services' Congregate Nutrition Services Program. The dine-out feature needs certain improvements and clarifications to facilitate effective and efficient administration. These include: (1) more specific guidance on the types and numbers of restaurants that States should recruit to fulfill program goals; (2) a determination of whether food coupons may be used for takeout

orders; and (3) a resolution of restaurants' participant identification problems

115875

[*Agency Procedures for Processing Dredging Permits*]. July 22, 1981. 8 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Associate Director, Senior Level, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Environmental Protection Agency; United States Fish and Wildlife Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: National Marine Fisheries Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries

Abstract: A GAO review identified common delays and problems in the Corps of Engineers' dredging permit program and recommended ways to improve the process. An underlying reason for processing delays is the sharp increase in the number of laws and Federal agencies involved with the dredging permit process. Although current laws emphasize the need to protect valuable resources, they affect timely permit processing. The agencies involved have finalized memorandums of agreement to help reduce commenting time and referral procedures for resolving agency differences. However, the success of these agreements will depend on the spirit of cooperation among the agencies and the ease with which time extensions and referrals are obtained. The Corps also encountered considerable delay during final processing. It is unrealistic to expect a large decrease in permit processing time without a major change in the process. The Corps has taken several steps to increase the timeliness in processing. However, its overall success is difficult to determine. Interagency coordination has been reported as being highly successful among the other agencies involved. Proposed legislation would authorize the Secretary of the Army to decide on dredging material disposal sites for maintenance operations, subject to congressional approval. This would limit the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) authority to prohibit disposal of dredged material for environmental reasons. If the Corps determines that the incremental benefits of mitigating conditions do not justify the related cost, the conditions could be omitted from environmental impact statements. These changes could speed navigation improvement projects but reduce consideration of environmental issues. GAO believes that, at a minimum, all major differences between the Corps and EPA should be highlighted in the Secretary's submission to Congress for approval. Under the new legislation, the Corps will be required to complete in 1 year the environmental impact statement work necessary for all projects scheduled in the 5-year program. This will probably not provide time to adequately consider the environmental effects of these projects. The proposed legislation would require agencies to establish memorandums of agreement for interagency review and time periods in which to comment on maintenance projects and navigation improvement projects. GAO endorses these specific timeframes.

115938

Improving Sanitation and Federal Inspection at Slaughter Plants: How To Get Better Results for the Inspection Dollar. CED-81-118; B-203654. July 30, 1981. 51 pp. plus 6 appendices (9 pp.). Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection; Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921); Food; Effect-

tiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Income (1729)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. -451-et-seq.)

Abstract: GAO reviewed the administration of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act by the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) at meat and poultry slaughter plants that do business in interstate commerce. Certain areas were identified in which FSIS could improve inspection activities and plant managers could better carry out their responsibilities to assure that slaughter plant operations are sanitary and that meat and poultry products are wholesome, unadulterated, and properly marked. **Findings/Conclusions:** Those areas needing improvement included: (1) sanitation; (2) pest control; (3) plant water systems; (4) product acceptance testing programs; (5) ante-mortem and post-mortem examinations, and (6) controls over condemned and inedible materials. Unannounced visits were made to 62 randomly selected meat and poultry slaughter plants in six States to evaluate plant and inspection staff compliance with inspection program requirements. Nearly one-fourth of those plants visited were not in compliance with one or more of the six basic inspection program requirements. The high incidence of unacceptable ratings and the large number of deficiencies found at plants not severe enough to warrant unacceptable ratings showed that both plant managers and inspection program staff were not fully meeting their responsibilities. Part of this inadequacy could have been due to a shortage of trained inspectors caused by hiring and budget restrictions. Because of these shortages, certain inspection responsibilities had been neglected, including supervising line inspectors, performing acceptance tests, monitoring plant conditions and operations, and inspecting processing departments. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to require meat and poultry inspection program supervisors to document the results of their required monthly plant reviews. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to provide meat and poultry inspection program supervisors with improved plant-rating criteria that can be applied uniformly and that specify review findings which require a plant to be rated unacceptable in each rating area and overall. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to emphasize to meat and poultry inspection program supervisors the importance of taking effective actions to bring plants up to acceptable levels of compliance when they are found to be out of compliance. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to develop a formal program for reinspecting edible meat byproducts. The program should provide a reliable indicator that the product sampled is representative of the universe sampled and should include specific guidance to inspectors for conducting reinspections and documenting the results. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to instruct slaughter plant inspectors and supervisors to give increased attention to assuring that ante-mortem facilities and equipment are properly maintained and that inspectors perform their examinations of edible and inedible products in the prescribed manner. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to consider the findings in this chapter in developing a swine carcass acceptance testing program and in any revision of the cattle and poultry acceptance testing programs. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to improve the acceptance

testing programs by providing more detailed guidance for selecting random cattle carcass samples when the day's operation is longer or shorter than anticipated and by prescribing security measures to assure that cattle carcasses are not tampered with before the acceptance tests. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to reevaluate and, where appropriate, strengthen the acceptance criteria to provide consumers with greater protection against receiving meat products contaminated or adulterated by dressing defects. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to improve FSIS monitoring of acceptance testing programs to assure that the programs are conducted in the prescribed manner and to assure the programs' integrity. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to require plant managers to obtain inspector approval of water system repairs and changes that could affect FSIS system requirements. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to issue more detailed guidelines on inspection program requirements for slaughter plant water systems and emphasize to inspectors and supervisors the importance of regularly inspecting these systems. The guidelines should include illustrations and descriptions of deficiencies likely to be encountered. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to require supervisors, as a one-time effort, to determine compliance with inspection program water system requirements during one of their monthly visits to each slaughter plant and to prepare special reports on their findings and any corrective actions taken. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to develop a system of financial disincentives for slaughter plant managers who allow less than sanitary conditions to exist in their plants. This kind of system could include financial penalties, for which legal authority would be required, for poor sanitation or scheduling preoperative inspections late enough so that correcting any problems found would delay slaughter operations. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to instruct plant inspectors on the need to document all deficiencies found during sanitation inspections and emphasize to supervisors that deficiency records need to be kept. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to more effectively monitor inspectors and inspection supervisors as they work to bring slaughter plants into compliance with sanitation requirements. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to require meat and poultry inspectors and supervisors to enforce more strictly FSIS sanitation requirements at slaughter plants with objectives of improving day-to-day plant sanitation and having plants maintain better sanitation on their own initiative rather than responding to deficiencies pointed out by inspectors.

115978

Lessons To Be Learned From Offsetting the Impact of the Soviet Grain Sales Suspension. CED-81-110, B-199124. July 27, 1981. Released July 28, 1981. 51 pp. plus 6 appendices (12 pp.). Report to Rep. William C. Wampler; Rep. Larry J. Hopkins; Rep. Thomas M. Hagedorn; Rep. Glenn L. English; Rep. E. Thomas Coleman; Rep. Douglas K. Bereuter; Sen. Charles E. Grassley; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: U.S.-Soviet Relations (0654); Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Maintain Strong U.S. Agricultural Commercial Exports (1731).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Union of

Soviet Socialist Republics; Department of Commerce; Department of State; Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Government Operations; House Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Rep. William C. Wampler; Rep. Larry J. Hopkins; Rep. Thomas M. Hagedorn; Rep. Glenn L. English; Rep. E. Thomas Coleman; Rep. Douglas K. Bereuter; Sen. Charles E. Grassley

Authority: Food Security Wheat Reserve Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-494; 94 Stat. 2578). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.). Export Sales Reporting Act (7 U.S.C. 612c-3). Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2401). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113; 91 Stat. 913) P.L. 96-234. 94 Stat. 333.

Abstract: On January 4, 1980, the President announced that, for foreign policy and national security reasons, the Federal Government was suspending the shipment of about 18 million metric tons of agricultural commodities to the Soviet Union. The President directed the Department of Agriculture to take actions to offset the suspension's impact on farmers. These offsetting actions, most of which were concerned with stabilizing market prices, included removing the suspended grain from the market by increasing the wheat and corn price-support loan rates, adjusting the farmer-owned reserve program, purchasing grain directly from farmers and country grain elevators, and purchasing exporters' undeliverable grain contracts with the Soviet Union. **Findings/Conclusions:** Because of the short time between the decision to suspend shipments and the suspension's announcement, Agriculture was not able to analyze thoroughly the suspension's potential impact and to develop a comprehensive plan of offsetting actions. The lack of adequate planning caused Agriculture to: (1) erroneously anticipate that the farmer-owned reserve would efficiently remove the undeliverable grain; (2) purchase the exporters' Soviet contracts valued at about \$2.4 billion with little documentation that such purchase was necessary; and (3) implement inefficiently the offsetting actions. Since any future suspension of the export of agricultural commodities may have a severe effect on the grain production and marketing industries, it is important that the potential effects of the various actions that could be taken to offset the potential impact of any further suspensions be identified and analyzed. Agriculture's purchase and resale of the exporters' Soviet contracts and its purchase of corn and wheat from farmers were implemented in a manner which led to Federal losses or increased Federal costs. A Government monitoring program set up to identify illegal shipments to the Soviet Union was reasonably successful in identifying and discouraging direct shipments from U.S. ports to the Soviet Union. However, it was not feasible to closely monitor for possible unauthorized transshipments. The Soviet Union was able to substantially offset the suspension's impact by increasing imports from other countries and drawing down its reserves. **Recommendation To Agencies:** If the Commodity Credit Corporation again considers open-market purchases as an offsetting action, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct it to purchase only the types and grades of commodities suspended from shipment and to make such purchases at prices within a reasonable amount of the existing market price. If the Commodity Credit Corporation again considers purchasing exporters' contracts to offset the impact of any future suspensions, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct it to: (1) prepare an economic justification for each commodity involved in the suspension to determine if such purchase is necessary; and (2) estimate any suspension-related benefits and detrimental effects to the exporters and use both estimates in determining the extent of Federal assistance needed. The Secretary of Agriculture should, after assessing existing farm programs, develop and submit to Congress any legislative recommendations for modifying existing programs or instituting new programs that the Secretary finds are necessary in developing a contingency plan. The Secretary of Agri-

culture should develop and keep current a contingency plan that would include: (1) an assessment of whether existing farm programs are flexible enough to efficiently and effectively offset the impact of a grain sales suspension on farmers; (2) an evaluation of the types and availability of data needed to determine on short notice the extent and severity of a suspension's impact on farmers, grain elevators, grain transporters, and exporters; and (3) an analysis of the extent, if any, to which the impact on each of the agricultural sectors should be offset.

115990

[Application of Fair Labor Standards Act to Agriculture Meat Inspectors]. B-195921. July 31, 1981. 13 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).
Decision re: Meat Inspectors, Department of Agriculture, by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General

Contact: Office of the General Counsel

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Labor; Office of Personnel Management; American Federation of Government Employees, Food Safety and Inspection Service.
Authority: Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201). Portal-to-Portal Act of 1947 (29 U.S.C. 254(a)). *Steiner v. Mitchell*, 350 U.S. 247 (1956). Food Safety and Quality Service, Meat and Poultry Inspectors Manual of Procedures, Personal Hygiene, subpart 8-C. Department of Labor v. E.R. Field Inc., 495 F.2d 749 (1st Cir. 1974). B-199474 (1981).

Abstract: In response to the former Secretary of Agriculture's request, GAO reviewed the time spent by the food inspectors of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Quality Service (FSQS) in clothes-changing and cleanup activities to determine whether the time is considered as hours of work under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) held that certain USDA red meat inspectors, who are required to wear protective clothing and equipment and to keep them clean, are involved in an integral and indispensable part of their principal activity under FLSA when they are engaged in clothes-changing and cleanup activities at their worksites. GAO would not disturb OPM factual findings unless they were clearly erroneous. GAO also determined that FLSA does not exclude red meat inspectors' clothes-changing and cleanup activities from being compensable hours worked under FLSA. In addition, there was no custom or practice to exclude such activities from being compensable. The meat inspectors union had always challenged the USDA determination to exclude such activities from being compensable from the time that FLSA was made applicable to Federal employees. Moreover, USDA had paid for a certain amount of clothes-changing and cleanup time in the past. Therefore, the time in question could be considered as compensable hours of work.

116007

Long-Range Planning Can Improve the Efficiency of Agricultural Research and Development. CED-81-141; B-201434. July 24, 1981. 21 pp. plus 4 appendices (10 pp.).

Report to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Adaptability of the Food Production System To Maintain Productivity Under Changed Conditions (1728).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Rep.

George E. Brown, Jr.

Authority: Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act (National). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113). P.L. 96-362. H.R. 2561 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the long-range planning for agricultural research and development which is being conducted by the Department of Agriculture, other affected agencies, and the States. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the U.S. agricultural research and development system does not perform national long-range planning which would meet generally accepted definitions of such planning. The key participants in the system engage in long-range planning only to a very limited extent. No rationale for long-range planning has been developed, and past planning efforts have not resulted in long-range plans. Currently some planning, but not long-range planning, is occurring. Many of the parties in the agricultural research and development system support the concept of national long-range planning, but a number of factors inhibit such planning. The States and the Department of Agriculture work together, coordinate research, and exchange extensive amounts of information. These efforts are independently managed and planned. The challenge of potential food shortages in the future make long-range planning more and more essential. The long-range planning that does occur is done almost exclusively by Agriculture and focuses on inhouse research. Current planning efforts deal primarily with short-term or operational planning. The authority and management for individual research projects is split among Federal, State, local, and private authorities. This fact, frequent changes in departmental leadership, and limited executive interest and guidance make long-range planning extremely difficult. Current agricultural research is not directed or influenced by a long-range plan. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should develop an agencywide long-range plan for agriculture research and development.

116022

Analysis of Certain Operations of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. CED-81-148, B-204183. July 30, 1981. Released August 5, 1981. 3 pp. plus 3 appendices (24 pp.).

Report to Sen. Roger W. Jepsen; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Income (1729).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture, Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Roger W. Jepsen.

Authority: Crop Insurance Act, Executive Order 11246. P.L. 96-365. 7 U.S.C. 1501.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed certain operations of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that because of the normal lag of FCIC in adjusting premium rates and its decision to concentrate its staff resources on expanding program coverage, FCIC has not made extensive changes in its premium rates since the passage of the Federal Crop Insurance Act amendment of 1980. As a result, the significant losses which occurred in 1980 have not yet been reflected in the premium rates of FCIC. These losses will be reflected in the premium rates of 1983. FCIC methodology in assembling and updating data for establishing an actuarial basis for insurance has also not changed since the passage of the amendment. Of 30 private insurance companies which initially indicated an interest, only 19 companies entered into reinsurance agreements for crop year 1981. Six other companies entered into agency sales and service agreements. Despite nationwide advertising of the credit permitted when hail and fire insurance is excluded from FCIC coverage and purchased from private firms, the producers

have applied to exclude hail and fire insurance coverage from only about 3,000 of the approximately 500,000 policies which have been written. FCIC estimates that total costs for fiscal year 1981 will amount to \$333 million. This amount included the estimated net deficit of \$203 million for crop year 1980. Preliminary data show that premiums for crop year 1981 will be about \$316.5 million, about a 108 percent increase from 1980. The number of acres insured increased to 47.7 million, or about an 81 percent increase.

116048

[*Protest of DOD Interpretation of Buy-American Restriction*]. B-203400, B-203400 2. August 10, 1981. 4 pp.

Decision re Southern Packaging and Storage Co., by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Southern Packaging and Storage Co.; Sky-Lab Foods, Inc.; Magic Pantry, Inc.; Defense Logistics Agency; Defense Personnel Support Center.

Authority: Department of Defense Appropriation Act, 1981 (P.L. 96-527, 94 Stat. 3068, 94 Stat. 3085); Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 101a et seq.). B-179607 (1974).

Abstract: A firm protested the Department of Defense's (DOD) interpretation of a Buy American restriction on food purchases, contained in DOD appropriation acts, which would permit a Canadian firm to participate as a subcontractor in a DOD procurement of combat rations. The Defense Personnel Support Center (DPSC) rejected earlier efforts by another firm to gain approval for the use of the same Canadian firm in this same procurement. This firm protested to GAO, and the Canadian firm pursued the matter through the office of the Secretary of Defense, which ultimately advised DPSC that the Canadian firm was a permissible subcontractor. The restriction states that no part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall be available for the procurement of any article of food not grown, reprocessed, reused, or produced in the United States or its possessions. The Canadian firm advised GAO that all foodstuffs and packaging materials used in the procurement would be purchased from U.S. suppliers. The foods, already cleaned and prepared, would be delivered to the firm; the only non-American input would be Canadian labor. Since DOD has waived the Buy American Act with respect to purchases from Canada, the issue was whether, in these circumstances, the restriction in the DOD Appropriation Act precludes the Canadian firm's participation in this procurement. GAO believed that the answer was in the meaning of the phrase "food not grown or produced." GAO believed that the meaning of the phrase "food produced" extended beyond the farm level to include food articles which are the result of a process or manufacture applied to agricultural products. However, GAO did not believe that the language of the restriction extends to the packaging of such items, even if some incidental mixing and processing were involved. Consequently, the contribution to the rations envisioned by the proposed Canadian subcontractor falls beyond the reach of the restriction. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

116097

Insights Gained in Workfare Demonstration Projects. CED-81-117; B-200467. July 31, 1981. Released August 12, 1981. 8 pp. plus 4 appendices (32 pp.).

Report to Rep. Paul Findley, by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Disincentives for Self Sufficiency (1321); Food: How Can the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program Be Improved (1722).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security; Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604 0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Labor, Ketrion, Inc.; Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Paul Findley.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. H.R. 3603 (97th Cong.). S. 1007 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: The Food Stamp Act of 1977 requires that the workfare concept, in which food stamp recipients will be required to work on public service jobs for the value of their food stamp benefits, be tested in 14 pilot projects. GAO reviewed the first year's operation of the Food Stamp Workfare Demonstration, focusing on the operating results of seven demonstration sites, problems in measuring workfare benefits and costs, and the need for legislative and administrative changes that would help provide a more effective and efficient workfare operation. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the maximum benefits available to the program were not realized because of shortcomings in Federal and local project design and administration. GAO suggested changes to increase household participation in workfare and help achieve workfare's basic objectives of: (1) deterring program participation by those who could work, but choose not to; (2) securing some repayment to taxpayers by those who are needy and receive assistance; and (3) introducing individuals to the work environment. Twenty-five percent of the program participants were in four categories which GAO did not believe merited automatic exemption from workfare. These categories were the participants in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Work Incentive Program, recipients of unemployment insurance benefits, students, and members of households whose earned incomes were equal to or greater than their monthly food stamp benefits. As most households' workfare obligations were less than 5 days a month, it seemed unlikely that workfare obligations would be a problem to these recipients. GAO found that a 30-day job search period given to new referrals to the program allows some participants to receive food stamp benefits for 2 months before being assigned to a workfare job. It found that workfare sanctions are not effective deterrents to workfare non-compliance and need to be strengthened. Also, the cost effectiveness of workfare was not determinable, and there was inadequate reporting to Congress on improvements needed in the program design and administrative procedures. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of Agriculture and Labor should keep Congress fully informed about the problems and results of the workfare demonstration. The Secretary of Agriculture should obtain meaningful cost data to show what costs would be incurred in a regular, ongoing workfare program, as distinguished from a demonstration. The Secretary of Agriculture should establish and implement an effective system for gathering information on all real benefits being achieved from the workfare demonstration, whether measurable in terms of dollars or not, to give a more accurate account of workfare's actual and potential benefits. Such benefits should include the value of work lost because sites did not immediately identify and assign eligible able-bodied persons to work when the demonstration began, as well as the impact of the demonstration on Food Stamp Program participation. The Secretary of Agriculture should modify workfare program regulations and administrative procedures to require that eligible participants be interviewed and assigned to public service jobs as soon as possible with approved exceptions only where large jurisdictions would encounter massive administrative burdens without a phase-in approach; require participating jurisdictions to randomly verify participants' reasons for not appearing for an interview or job assignment; require that participants not having a good reason for not completing their workfare obligation be immediately sanctioned, establish work standards for workfare assignments and impose sanctions for clearly substandard performance, and require that project design not restrict work benefits and provide for continuity of project operations.

116098

Continuation of the Resource Conservation and Development Program Raises Questions. CED-81-120, B-203482 August 11, 1981. Released August 14, 1981 28 pp plus 5 appendices (10 pp.). Report to Sen Mark O Hatfield, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Rep. Jamie L Whitten, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; by Milton J Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Land Use Planning and Control. Effectiveness of Programs Designed To Promote and Regulate the Development, Rehabilitation, and Conservation of Nonpublic Lands and Related Resources (2314)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Soil Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Soil and Water Conservation Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Rep. Jamie L Whitten; Sen. Mark O. Hatfield.

Authority: Bankhead-Jones Act (Farm Tenant) (7 U.S.C. 1010; 7 U.S.C. 1011; 50 Stat. 525). Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590a et seq.; 49 Stat. 163).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program and the administrative and legislative changes needed to improve the control and operation of the program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO was unable to develop a clear picture or measure of overall benefits under the program because program accomplishments are not clearly distinguishable at either the project or measure level. The principal problems involved lack of useful data, the intangible nature of some benefits, and varying or unknown degrees of project involvement. GAO was able to obtain cost information on the program overall and on each project but not on individual project measures. Pertinent technical assistance costs were not shown for individual measures. The omission of technical assistance costs in reporting completed measures seriously limited any attempt to evaluate the program's benefits in relation to its costs. Funds appropriated for cost sharing with local sponsors under the program have been used to finance many measures for which other Federal programs have been established. Once projects are authorized, they remain on the rolls indefinitely. Federally assisted sub-State planning organizations have the potential to become an alternative delivery system for activities carried out under the program because they perform many of the same functions. Some projects' area plans which specify goals, objectives, and measures to be undertaken have not been updated as required by program procedures. **Recommendation To Congress:** If Congress decides to continue the RC&D program, it should legislatively direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish several pilot projects where sub-State organizations would assume the functions of RC&D projects. Upon completion of such tests, the Secretary should be required to provide Congress an evaluation of the test results with such recommendations as may be indicated for transferring additional RC&D project functions to sub-State organizations or the reasons for retaining the functions within the existing RC&D program structure. If Congress decides to continue the RC&D program, it should legislatively require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish procedures for periodically reviewing project operations and deauthorizing projects which are no longer active or have developed the capabilities necessary to continue operating without Federal involvement. If Congress decides to continue the RC&D program, it should legislatively discontinue the use of program funds for

installing project measures currently authorized for financing under cost sharing arrangements. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Soil Conservation Service to develop and incorporate an approved evaluation procedure into the program's management process. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Soil Conservation Service to monitor the program more closely to assure that the projects' area plans are up to date and reflect any changed conditions in project circumstances. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Soil Conservation Service to improve its program information system to provide data which would permit better assessment of project benefits. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Soil Conservation Service to account for and identify the costs of providing technical assistance for each project measure.

116126

Changes in Federal Water Project Repayment Policies Can Reduce Federal Costs. CED-81-77; B-198377. August 7, 1981. 46 pp. plus 2 appendices (26 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effective Water Conservation and Reuse Programs (2504).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Water and Power Resources Subcommittee; House Committee on Public Works and Transportation: Water Resources Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Water Resources Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Water and Power Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Budget; Congress.

Authority: Reclamation Project Act of 1939 (53 Stat. 1187). Water Supply Act of 1958 (72 Stat. 319). P.L. 87-483.

Abstract: Because prior GAO studies disclosed several large Federal reservoirs with substantial amounts of unsold water or storage space, GAO reviewed the repayment policies and practices of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation that do not ensure fair and timely recovery of water projects' reimbursable costs. **Findings/Conclusions:** Current repayment policies, for the most part, require that water projects must be fully used to ensure cost recovery. However, much water is neither purchased nor used as originally intended and is likely to remain underutilized for years. As a result, the Federal Government will continue to absorb substantial costs. Agency officials have made some changes, but much more should be done. Millions of acre-feet of underutilized water are available in Federal reservoirs. Agency officials stated that they had no water marketing policies and generally relied on State water boards, local chambers of commerce, and water districts to carry out water marketing activities. Agencies have not taken advantage of opportunities to increase cost recovery. Sometimes agencies use outdated prices for determining operation and maintenance (O&M) costs. In some cases, repayment was not required even though water users received benefits. Payments received from water option contractors were not always apportioned to O&M costs. Occasionally, the Bureau of Reclamation charged water users for O&M costs but credited the revenues to construction cost repayment. As a result of such practices, reimbursable O&M costs had to be paid from Federal funds. O&M costs were not accumulated as reimbursables for future water price

determinations, but often were reassigned to nonreimbursable categories. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Interior should require a periodic review of regional pricing and accounting practices to ensure that they consistently and equitably apply agency policy. The Secretary of the Interior should require nationwide distribution of its and the Bureau of Reclamation's repayment policies, procedures, and applicable interpretations for establishing and implementing repayment requirements. The Secretary of the Interior should require specific approval of the Commissioner of Reclamation when contract revenues from Federal reservoirs will be applied to a non-Federal entity. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should establish policies that require all project purposes to share, in accordance with actual reservoir uses, in O&M expenses. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should establish policies that will require an interest allocation to be included in all water charges to municipal and industrial users. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should establish policies that will require unrecovered reimbursable O&M costs to be accumulated and considered in future price determinations. The Secretary of the Interior should require annual water price reevaluations as a basis for establishing new or amended contract prices. The Secretary of the Interior should require water contracts with renewal provisions to specify the method for price adjustments. The Secretary of the Interior should require water prices to be based upon how much water can be delivered and sold. The Secretary of the Interior should require reasonable payment for all water reservations. The Secretary of the Interior should issue instructions requiring that reallocation policies be equally applied to both reimbursable and nonreimbursable expenses. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should issue instructions requiring congressional authorization to be sought for water uses not specifically authorized. The Secretary of the Interior should issue instructions requiring that O&M cost reallocations be limited to those based upon demonstrated changes in benefits. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should annually disseminate information on the available water supply to Congress, State agencies, and potential buyers. The Secretary of the Interior should issue instructions requiring that option revenues be equitably allocated to O&M cost recovery. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should issue instructions requiring all reservoir users to share equitably in O&M cost recovery. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should develop an overall water marketing strategy for their agencies. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should issue instructions requiring all O&M charges to be updated annually and applied to new or amended contracts.

116129

[Overtime Compensation for Food Inspector]. B-196571 August 17, 1981 4 pp

Decision re: Nancy C. Jones; by John D. Heller, Acting Comptroller General

Contact: Office of the General Counsel

Organization Concerned: Food Safety and Inspection Service

Authority: B-195921 (1981) B-199673 (1981). B-199474 (1981). 29 U.S.C. 201 et seq. 29 U.S.C. 251 et seq. 29 U.S.C. 204(f). 29 U.S.C. 211(c)

Abstract: An advance decision was requested by a Department of Agriculture certifying officer concerning a food inspector who claimed overtime compensation for performing various duties outside of her regular working hours. She filed a complaint alleging that, during a 6-month period, she spent approximately 50 hours of her own time performing duties required by her job for which she was not paid. These duties included changing clothes, cleaning equipment, and filling out forms. The certifying officer stated that, although he did not disagree that time spent completing paperwork was compensable, the time involved was minimal and there was sufficient time during the employee's workday to complete all

required paperwork. Further, he stated that the clothes-changing and cleanup activities were not compensable under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because they were not indispensable to the performance of the employee's principal activity. According to Federal regulations, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is authorized to administer the provisions of FLSA. OPM investigated the matter and informed Agriculture that the employee was entitled to 46.75 hours of overtime based on estimates made by inspectors of the work performed on non-work time. The certifying officer submitted the matter to GAO because he was dissatisfied with the results of the OPM investigation. GAO held that, given the OPM procedure for processing complaints, including the opportunity for on-site investigations and a review of all pertinent evidence, it would not disturb the factual findings unless they were clearly erroneous, and the burden of proof is on the party challenging those findings. GAO concluded that there were no reasons to challenge the OPM decision. Therefore, the employee was entitled to the determined amount of overtime compensation.

116155

Legislative Developments. 1981. 2 pp

by Judith Hatter, GAO Office of the General Counsel.

In the GAO Review, Vol. 16, Issue 3, Summer 1981, pp. 57-58.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Defense; Veterans Administration; Department of Justice.

Authority: Farm Credit Act of 1971. Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-592, 94 Stat. 3437). Indian Health Care Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-537, 94 Stat. 3173). International Security and Development Cooperative Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-533). Government Corporation Control Act S. 42 (97th Cong.). S. 381 (97th Cong.). S. 591 (97th Cong.). H.R. 1399 (97th Cong.). H.R. 1887 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: Recent legislative developments have included: (1) amendments to the Farm Credit Act which require that GAO conduct an evaluation of the programs and activities authorized under the Act; (2) amendments to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act which provide for the establishment of programs in urban areas and rural communities to make health services more accessible to Indian populations; and (3) the establishment of the African Development Foundation which is a wholly owned Government corporation subject to GAO audit. Recent legislation which has been proposed following GAO recommendations has included: (1) an act to establish a committee to coordinate the sharing of medical resources between facilities of the Veterans Administration and those of the Department of Defense; (2) legislation which requires an annual audit by GAO of House Members' and committees' accounts; (3) the establishment of a Department of Justice Office of Audits; and (4) legislation to enhance the ability of the Government to collect delinquent taxes and give the Government new tools and incentives to strengthen lagging debt collection efforts.

116169

[GAO Comments on the Impact of the USDA Reorganization on Nutrition]. CED-81-150; B-204179. August 17, 1981. 12 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Report to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. Doug Walgren, Chairman, House Committee on Science and Technology; Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee, by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food; Adequacy of Nutrition Education and Information Programs (1718); Food; Adequacy and Focus of Federal Support of Human Nutrition Research (1756)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division
Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Science and Technology, Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture, Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee, *Rep* George E. Brown, Jr.; *Rep* Doug Walgren

Authority: Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113)

Abstract: GAO was requested to comment on the June 1981 reorganization of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its impact on nutrition. USDA is in the process of implementing the reorganization and identifying, addressing, and resolving the management and policy problems that occur with reorganization. In addition, details of the USDA nutrition policies have not been fully formulated. As a result, the comments were based primarily on what USDA officials told GAO and on the opinions of professionals from the nutrition community. **Findings/Conclusions:** The USDA reorganization: (1) separates some of the USDA nutrition information functions from its nutrition research functions, and (2) decentralizes its human nutrition research activities by transferring nutrition research activities from its former, high-level, separate-agency status to one of the component research programs of the Agricultural Research Service. According to the Secretary of Agriculture, the USDA restructuring was intended to: (1) increase the efficiency of USDA without additional cost or increase in personnel; (2) focus direction of the agencies along lines of functional responsibility, and (3) have a positive impact on program effectiveness. Major concerns expressed by individuals both inside and outside USDA were: (1) whether nutrition will be less visible and deemphasized; (2) how nutrition issues will be coordinated and integrated; (3) whether nutrition information policies, programs, and strategies will be adversely affected; and (4) whether nutrition research will continue to be supported under its new decentralized setup.

116170

Emerging Issues From New Product Development in Food Manufacturing Industries. CED-81-138. August 19, 1981. 20 pp plus 1 appendix (4 pp.).

Staff Study by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Actions in the Food Processing and Distribution Sectors (1725).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Federal Trade Commission.

Authority: Sherman Antitrust Act, Trade Commission Act, Clayton Act (Trusts).

Abstract: GAO examined the nature and magnitude of the changes that have taken place in the food industry and identified issues which related to them. It did not attempt to provide resolution of the issues nor did it intend for its list to be all-inclusive. The issues should help to provide a better understanding of the complex task facing policymakers in analyzing the performance of the food manufacturing industry. The structure of the food industry has undergone a significant transformation over the past half century. More new products are now being manufactured by fewer firms. The frequency of high market concentration, whereby fewer and fewer firms account for most sales or market production, and its effects on competition, raises a number of questions for consideration by the Government and society as a whole. However, the ability of the Government and society to analyze the industry's

performance has not kept pace where the primary focus of competitive activity has been new product development. Policymakers are faced with a complicated challenge defining performance measures to determine how well the market system serves the aims of society.

116172

Cooperative Extension Service's Mission and Federal Role Need Congressional Clarification. CED-81-119, B-199623. August 21, 1981. 34 pp plus 7 appendices (15 pp.)

Report to Congress, by John D. Heller, Acting Comptroller General

Issue Area: Food: Effects of Scarcity in Farm Input Resources (1726); Education: Quality of Life of Children and Their Families (3305)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, Science and Education Administration; Extension Service.

Congressional Relevance: Congress

Authority: Morrill Act (Agricultural Colleges) Hatch Act (Agricultural Experiment Stations) (7 U.S.C. 361a et seq.). Smith-Lever Act (Agricultural Extension Work) (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3301). Higher Education Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-329). 7 U.S.C. 3123

Abstract: The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest education system of its kind in the world. It is active in rural, suburban, and urban communities and, in addition to agricultural and home economics programs, offers programs in social and economic problems and cultural, recreational, and leisure-time activities. The Extension Service was established in 1914 primarily to provide farmers with information from agricultural research and to encourage them to adopt improved farming methods. Recently, its programs have expanded to include instruction in arts and crafts, recreation, creative and performing arts, and mental and emotional health. GAO reviewed the Extension Service to determine whether its programs were meeting their basic missions. **Findings/Conclusions:** As more programs vie for Extension Service resources, disagreements have occurred over what its mission should be. Some groups feel that it is ignoring their needs; others say it is trying to be all things to all people. GAO stated that, because the demands for the Extension Service's programs are great and its resources are limited, its available resources need to be used as efficiently as possible. GAO also stated that the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Federal Extension Service, the Federal agency involved, should assume a more active leadership role in the Extension Service program development. GAO concluded that improved performance and impact measurement is needed to determine whether extension programs are effective. There are no comprehensive Service-wide evaluation requirements due to a lack of a central office to clearly define such standards. GAO believes that USDA is the natural place within the organization from which to provide leadership and direction in evaluation. **Recommendation To Congress:** The appropriate congressional committees should consider the role that they want the USDA Federal Extension Service to play in providing extension program leadership and guidance. The appropriate congressional committees should examine the Cooperative Extension Service's mission. As part of this process, the committees could direct the Secretary of Agriculture to prepare, in cooperation with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, an updated statement of the Extension Service's mission. The committees could require this statement to contain explicit mission objectives and priorities and to be submitted to them for their information and review. The committees could also require the Extension Service to provide periodic progress reports

on meeting its goals and objectives. In addition, the committees could also hold oversight hearings on the Cooperative Extension Service to review current extension programming and to consider and focus on the mission that the committees want carried out. The hearings could provide the basis to develop legislation, if necessary, to more clearly define the Cooperative Extension Service's mission.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should assume leadership, in cooperation with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, for developing and implementing a uniform accountability and evaluation system for the Cooperative Extension Service. The system should include provisions for planning and coordinating accountability and evaluation activities throughout the Extension Service. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Federal Extension Service to become more involved with the States in the total extension program development process. This includes: (1) determining, in cooperation with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, national extension program priorities and goals; (2) providing leadership in getting States to implement extension programs which address national extension priorities; and (3) interacting with States in developing as well as reviewing work plans.

116189

[Research Aimed at Solving Water Supply and Quality Problems]. August 24, 1981. 5 pp.

Speech before the Water Reuse Symposium; by Lewis M. Ogles, Senior Evaluator, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Water Resources Council.

Authority: Water Research and Development Act.

Abstract: The United States has an abundant water supply, but its geographical distribution and availability often do not match demand. GAO believes that an overall comparative assessment of conservation and augmentation technologies is needed to determine which have the most potential for solving water supply and quality problems at the lowest cost and with the least risk. There does not appear to be a correlation between the potential of some technologies and their relative level of Federal funding. While some appear to have low potential and high funding, others appear to have high potential and low funding. Factors to be considered in assessing technologies' potential include: (1) an overall comparative assessment should be preceded by regional and local assessments, because potential solutions may differ among regions and localities; (2) all regional and local water problems and potential solutions should be identified, and (3) consideration should be given to the impact of technical, environmental, legal, and social obstacles. GAO believes that formal planning can assist technology development and increase the likelihood of user acceptance. Without research plans, results may sit idle, programs may be prolonged with no determination as to whether objectives have been satisfied, and technical, environmental, legal, and social obstacles may not be adequately addressed and dealt with. A plan for developing a particular conservation or augmentation technology should be a formal mechanism which identifies the tasks needed to develop the technology and encourage user acceptance. GAO believes that planning could help tie many agencies' applied research projects into meaningful programs to conserve or augment water supplies. GAO examined past and current Federal efforts at coordinating water-related research and the need for an organization to be specifically assigned this responsibility. GAO believes that the Water Resources Council, a Federal entity responsible for assessing the adequacy of the Nation's water supplies, should be assigned this responsibility. However, if problems cited by agencies are not overcome, GAO believes that establishing a water resources research committee with representatives from the major agencies involved in water research could be an effective alternative.

116190

[Rate Basis for Reimbursement to States of Food Stamp Program Administrative Costs]. A-51604. August 25, 1981. 3 pp.

Decision re: Reimbursement to States of Food Stamp Program Administrative Costs; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture, California; Department of Social Services; Texas.

Authority: 9 C.F.R. 271.2(c). 7 C.F.R. 275.9(d)(2). A-51604 (1980). 7 U.S.C. 2013(c).

Abstract: Two States requested GAO to reconsider its decision regarding the reimbursement to States of Food Stamp Program administrative costs. The previous case addressed the question of whether the Department of Agriculture (USDA), in reimbursing States for part of their administrative costs in carrying out the Food Stamp Program, should reimburse States using a cash basis method of accounting at the rate effective when the payments were actually made by the State or at the rate effective when the administrative costs were incurred. Because the States did not have an opportunity to present their position when GAO first considered this matter, GAO agreed to reconsider. Previously, GAO concluded that the USDA decision to reimburse all States, regardless of whether they use a cash basis or accrual basis of accounting at the rate in effect when the costs were incurred, was not inconsistent with either statute or regulation. Thus, citing well established legal principles that great deference be given to the interpretation of a statute by the agency charged with its administration and that the agency's position will only be overturned if it is found to be arbitrary and capricious, GAO saw no basis to challenge the USDA interpretation. The States argue, however, that a proper reading of the regulations suggests that States using a cash basis method of accounting should be reimbursed at the rate in effect on the date the administrative costs are actually paid. In reaching this conclusion, the States contend that the regulation which provides for reimbursement at the rate in effect when the costs are incurred must be read in conjunction with several other sections of the regulations to determine when costs are considered to be incurred for a cash basis State. GAO, however, was unable to find that the USDA Secretary's interpretation was arbitrary, capricious, or legally untenable. Accordingly, the previous decision was affirmed.

116208

U.S. Strategy Needed for Water Supply Assistance to Developing Countries. ID-81-51, B-203909. August 25, 1981. 31 pp. plus 4 appendices (35 pp.)

Report to Congress, by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630); Water and Water Related Programs: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (2551).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: International Development Cooperation Agency; Agency for International Development; Department of State; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Abstract: A review was conducted of water resources development activities and problems in developing countries, especially those problems associated with providing community water supplies. The United States has not developed water policies and strategies despite the fact that much of the billions of dollars in financial

support for developing country water projects emanates either directly or indirectly from the United States. **Findings/Conclusions:** Numerous problems and constraints limit the progress that developing countries can make toward the United Nations' (UN) goal to provide clean water and adequate sanitation for all by the year 1990. These major constraints involve, funding, institutional and manpower needs, concentration of assistance in urban areas, even though the rural poor are in greatest need; and problems in maintaining facilities. Funding assistance needed will have to more than double and developing countries would have to double their own funding just to meet the minimum needed to attain the UN goal. Even if sufficient funds were provided, developing countries would not be able to use the funds efficiently and in time to meet the goal because of a lack of trained personnel. Most of the projects to date have been in urban areas. However, about 70 percent of the population in developing countries live in rural areas. Since developing countries decide themselves where the projects are to be located, the donors need to exert influence to ensure that the rural areas receive at least a portion of the assistance given. Further, information is not systematically generated to apprise host governments and aid donors of water supply maintenance problems and projects which need rehabilitation. Such information could be helpful in deciding how to make the best use of available funds for increased access to water supplies by the people of developing countries. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency should emphasize the need to fund programs for the institutional development and training of maintenance personnel in those countries having the most critical needs. The Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency should collect and maintain information which would systematically assess the condition of existing water supply and sanitation projects and suggest a program to help those in need of rehabilitation. The Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency should encourage external donors to provide incentives to developing countries which have demonstrated that they will maintain water supply and sanitation projects. The Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency should emphasize use of bilateral and multilateral funds for water development activities and projects which will have a significant impact on the rural poor. The Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency should incorporate into loan agreements a requirement that developing countries provide funds for project maintenance. The Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency should establish reasonable and attainable interim goals during the Water Decade. These goals should be established on a country-by-country basis, consistent with country surveys of water resources and needs.

116234

Review of Financial Statements of Commodity Credit Corporation. CED-81-137; B-202690. August 13, 1981. 5 pp. plus 4 appendices (33 pp.)

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting (2800).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Government Corporation Control Act (31 U.S.C. 841), P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: A review was conducted of the statement of financial condition of the Commodity Credit Corporation as of September 30, 1980, and its related statements of income and expense, analysis of deficit, and source and application of funds for the year then ended. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that certain accounting

policies and practices of the Corporation depart from generally accepted accounting principles. These departures, which affect the presentation of information in the financial statements, included: (1) interest income and accrued interest receivable of at least \$200 million were not recognized in the proper accounting period on nonrecourse loans, (2) significant accounting transactions were not adequately shown on the financial statements; (3) inventory of about \$1.7 billion may have been substantially overvalued; (4) accrued interest receivable of about \$144 million on Public Law 83-480 sales were not separately shown in the statement of financial condition; and (5) the footnote to the financial statements did not adequately describe accounting treatment of the deferred credit account for Public Law 83-480 sales. The total effect of these departures on the Corporation's financial statements has not been determined. Because of these departures and because its review was limited principally to inquiries of Corporation personnel and analytical procedures applied to financial data, GAO did not express an opinion on the Corporation's financial statements.

116235

National Direction Required for Effective Management of America's Fish and Wildlife. CED-81-107, B-196756. August 24, 1981. 63 pp. plus 5 appendices (30 pp.).

Report to James G. Watt, Secretary, Department of the Interior; John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (2251); Land Use Planning and Control: Management of Federal Lands (2306); Water and Water Related Programs: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (2551).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Recreational Resources (303.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of the Interior; United States Fish and Wildlife Service; Bureau of Land Management; Forest Service; National Park Service; Department of the Interior: Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Authority: Animal Damage Control Act of 1931 (7 U.S.C. 426 et seq.; 16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.; 16 U.S.C. 528 et seq.; 43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.; 43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.). Estuarine Act (16 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.). Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-487; 16 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., 94 Stat. 2371). Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, White Act (Alaska Fisheries), Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960, Land Policy and Management Act, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO conducted a review of specific Federal fish and wildlife programs to evaluate the overall effectiveness of Federal agencies' management of fish and wildlife resources and habitat to assure that development activities have the least possible adverse effect on fish and wildlife. **Findings/Conclusions:** Several laws require Federal agencies to seek the advice of the Fish and Wildlife Service on planned activities that may affect fish and wildlife. However, the Service is able to respond to only about half of these requests because of a lack of staff and funds. The Service has not established a priority system to identify and respond to those projects having the worst potential impact on fish and wildlife.

Effective management of the National Wildlife Refuge System has been limited because the Service has not provided the needed guidance. The Service is also having problems managing the National Fish Hatchery System. It has not been able to establish and carry out national priorities for identifying which fish species to produce and which hatcheries to operate. Lack of direction and funding limitations contribute to this problem. For example, the National Wildlife Refuge and Fish Hatchery Systems have deteriorated to the point where there is a \$650 million new development and rehabilitation backlog. The Service's current policy and attitudes stress conservation and protection of fish and wildlife, and this conflicts with the Animal Damage Control Act's original intent of predator control. The current program has not significantly reduced livestock losses caused by predators. Livestock insurance as an alternative was considered but was not feasible. Thus, managing the newly designated Alaskan Federal lands presents a challenge between conservation and development interests. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should enter into a cooperative agreement which will give the Fish and Wildlife Service the authority to decide how animals should be managed by other agencies in those instances where wildlife species migrate across the boundaries and are being managed by more than one Federal agency. Such an agreement should also include the States where appropriate. The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should direct the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the Forest Service to give greater emphasis to conserving and managing fish and wildlife. Should the Animal Damage Control Program remain in Interior, the Secretary of the Interior should direct the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks to determine whether the control program should: (1) be continued as is, or be modified to increase effectiveness; and (2) more fully explore alternatives such as livestock insurance to determine if they are viable. Should the Animal Damage Control Program remain in Interior, the Secretary of the Interior should direct the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks to develop and propose to Congress amendments to the Animal Damage Control Act of 1931 that reflect the current objectives of the Animal Damage Control Program to bring predators under control, rather than to eradicate, suppress, and destroy them. The Secretary of the Interior should direct the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks to review the condition of refuges and hatcheries and establish priorities for a rehabilitation program. The Secretary of the Interior should direct the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks to determine which marginal refuges and hatcheries could be eliminated, propose a plan to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees setting forth the reasons why they should be discontinued, and seek approval from the Committees to close them. The Secretary of the Interior should direct the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks to establish priorities on the types of refuges and hatcheries that should be developed, operated, and maintained. The Secretary of the Interior should direct the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks to update the Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Refuge Manual and flyway management plans. The Secretary of the Interior should establish policies, objectives, and guidance for an effective fish and wildlife research program. As part of this effort, the Secretary should consolidate the Fish and Wildlife Service's two research programs into one organizational unit. The Secretary of the Interior should review the Fish and Wildlife Service's operations to determine whether its new priority system is effective in identifying those projects that have the greatest potential adverse impact on fish and wildlife.

116251

Limited-Resource Farmer Loans: More Can Be Done To Achieve Program Goals and Reduce Costs. CED-81-144; B-204258, August 31,

1981. 30 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Domestic Housing and Community Development; Effectiveness of Federal Loan Programs for Farmers (2124).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); Community and Regional Development, Area and Regional Development (452.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on the Budget; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Budget.

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). Housing Act of 1949 P.L. 96-438. Farmers Home Administration Instruction 1924-B. H. Rept. 95-986 S. Rept. 95-752.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) program for providing low-interest rate loans to limited-resource farmers to determine whether more supervision and technical assistance were needed to achieve program goals and whether improvements were needed to control costs and safeguard against misuse of program funds. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the management assistance provided to limited-resource borrowers has been inadequate and limited. As a result, borrowers will have a hard time meeting the program goals of increasing production, incomes, and living standards. Additionally, GAO found that FmHA did not always identify borrower weaknesses which needed attention or farm or financial management improvements or practices which needed development. Significant information was sometimes omitted from annual farm plans, and long-range planning was limited or nonexistent. The importance of a record-keeping system was not always discussed. Farm visits were not always made, and yearend analyses of farm records were not always made to determine progress, problems, and needed corrective actions. FmHA staffing has not been adequate to provide the level of assistance needed, and other Department of Agriculture agencies are not being used effectively to obtain additional assistance. FmHA has made limited-resource loans to borrowers who were ineligible, and loan files were not always fully documented to support the loans. Because the subsidies can be substantial, internal controls must be adequate to assure that only eligible borrowers receive them. A good internal control system which separates the duties and procedures governing the authorization, preparation, review, and flow of transactions through the system is lacking. It may be possible to recapture interest subsidies on the loans from the appreciation in farm values when the farm is sold, transferred, or no longer farmed by the borrower. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Secretary of Agriculture, in an effort to reduce subsidy costs, should direct the FmHA Administrator to seek legislation to permit the recapture of Federal subsidies on limited-resource farm ownership loans when the property is no longer farmed by the borrower, sold, or transferred. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FmHA Administrator to improve to the extent possible the FmHA internal control system in the limited-resource program by using the review functions to assure compliance with FmHA documentation requirements. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FmHA Administrator to improve, to the extent possible, the FmHA internal control system in the limited-resource program by subjecting the county supervisor's decision to increase or continue present interest rates to review and concurrence by another individual or group. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FmHA Administrator to improve, to the extent possible, the FmHA internal control system in the limited-resource program by assuring that loan approval decisions are not made by those individuals responsible for processing the loan and documenting all the facts in support of loan approval. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FmHA Administrator to emphasize to FmHA

county officials the importance of recording in the Farm and Home Plan the actual results of the annual farm operations. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FmHA Administrator to develop more appropriate technical aids or forms to encourage more effective long-range planning of a borrower's farm operation and in planning and carrying out farm visits. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FmHA Administrator to revise FmHA instruction 1924-B to specify the priority to be given in supervising limited-resource borrowers. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FmHA Administrator to make more effective use of the resources available from other Department of Agriculture agencies by establishing formal working agreements and referral systems, by performing joint farm planning for existing and future limited-resource borrowers, and by reporting back to the Secretary on the progress and problems being encountered in obtaining such cooperation.

116285

[*Protest of Department of Interior Contract Award*]. B-202433 September 9, 1981. 7 pp.

Decision re: Navajo Food Products, Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Indian Affairs; Navajo Food Products, Inc.; Department of the Interior.

Authority: Buy Indian Act (25 U.S.C. 47). Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 552) 41 C.F.R. 14H-3.215-70. 56 Comp. Gen. 178. 60 Comp. Gen. 36. F.P.R. 1-1.601-1 F.P.R. 1-2.404-1 F.P.R. 1-2.407-1. F.P.R. 1-1.1203 Perkins v. Lukens Steel Co., 310 U.S. 113 (1940) Coyne-Delaney Co., Inc. v. Capital Development Board of the State of Illinois, 616 F.2d 341 (7th Cir. 1980). BIA [20] Manual 2.1. B-188888 (1977). B-196924 (1980). B-195990 (1980). B-197209 (1980). B-203175 (1981). 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2).

Abstract: A firm protested the award of contracts by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The record showed that the protester had supplied dairy products for the BIA school food program for the 10 years preceding this procurement under contracts negotiated under the Buy Indian Act. The Act permits the negotiation of contracts with Indians to the exclusion of non-Indians. The Department of the Interior's policy provided for contracting with qualified Indian firms to the maximum extent practicable; non-Indian firms are to be contacted only after it has been determined that there are no qualified Indian contractors within the normal competitive area that can meet the Government's requirement and that are interested in doing so. On the basis of a BIA review and complaints from school officials about the high price and poor quality of the dairy products furnished by the protester, the Commissioner of BIA formally waived the Act preference for the 1981 procurement and authorized the purchase of the dairy products on the open market. BIA had not advised the protester that the 1981 requirement was going to be competed without the Act preference, and the protester assumed that, as the only Indian-owned firm in the area, it was going to receive the 1981 contract. The protester contended that: (1) BIA never published in the Federal Register the criteria that it used to decide whether to waive the Buy Indian Act's preference, and this violated the Administrative Procedure Act; (2) it was not appropriate for BIA to award contracts under a solicitation that stated that it was for information purposes only; and (3) the award-ee lacked the facilities to properly perform the contract. GAO held that: (1) the protester's argument was without merit since the Buy Indian Act exempts contract matters from the requirement in the Administrative Procedure Act that agencies publish various procedural and substantive rules and policies in the Federal Register; (2) BIA properly could award contracts under the solicitation despite the notice that it was for information purposes only since the notice also cautioned firms to submit best bids and since the Government reserved the right to make the award to the low bidder; and (3) the final contention involved the firm's

responsibility which did not involve the issue of fraud, and therefore was not for GAO review. Accordingly, the protest was denied in part and dismissed in part

116297

Grain Fumigation: A Multifaceted Issue Needing Coordinated Attention. CED-81-152, B-204571. September 10, 1981. 17 pp

Report to Nancy H. Steorts, Chairman, Consumer Product Safety Commission; C. W. McMillan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Agriculture; Arthur Hull Hayes, Jr., Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, Anne M. Gorsuch, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, Thorne G. Auchter, Assistant Secretary for Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: Food. Need for Federal Actions in the Food Processing and Distribution Sectors (1725); National Productivity: Productivity for Common Government Functions (2902).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); Transportation (400.0); Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Environmental Protection Agency; Food and Drug Administration; Department of Agriculture; Consumer Product Safety Commission; Department of Transportation; Department of Health and Human Services; Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group.

Abstract: Despite many years of using fumigants to eradicate insect pests from grain and grain products and despite the involvement of many Government agencies in various facets of this activity, fumigant problems remain and much still needs to be learned about fumigants and their effects on vegetation, pests, and humans. A number of fumigant-related problems were identified by GAO, including the Federal Government's fragmented involvement in this area. **Findings/Conclusions:** The work done by GAO disclosed that: (1) grain workers are exposed to potentially unsafe fumigant levels; (2) workers' concerns about health as a result of fumigant exposure have strained relations between some company and union officials and among other parties involved in shipping, handling, and storing grain; (3) potentially harmful fumigant residue has been found in some food products; and (4) a need exists for more knowledge about fumigants and their effects to either reduce current unwarranted anxiety levels or result in documented support for stronger, future precautionary measures. GAO further pointed out that the Federal approach to the subject is fragmented; each agency often works independently without any one agency having a good overview of all that is going on. As a result, work may be duplicated among agencies, and lines of responsibility are not always clear. GAO believes that the Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group, established to allow participating agencies to work closely together on topics that cross agency lines, is a proper forum to bring various agencies together and provide the overseer role that is needed. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group should address the problems discussed and any related issues. The Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group should assume the role of overseer of the fumigation area and publicize this role to its participating agencies and others. The Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group should accept grain fumigation as a topic for its consideration.

116304

Efforts To Improve School Lunch Programs--Are They Paying Off? CED-81-121; B-204143. September 9, 1981. 33 pp. plus 7 appendices (48 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food; Federal Domestic Food Assistance Programs (1710).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Income Security; Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Education and Labor; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981

Abstract: School food service programs across the Nation, especially in high schools, are having difficulty in effectively providing lunches to the Nation's children. Many programs are faced with increasing meal costs, declining student participation, plate waste, and unanswered questions about the nutrients in the meals. GAO reviewed seven school districts to determine if their innovative approaches were solving or aggravating problems in the lunch program. **Findings/Conclusions:** None of the high school lunch formats reviewed met the program's recommended dietary allowances even though the lunches as offered, on the average, met or exceeded the amounts of food required by the Department of Agriculture. Because students also eat at other times of the day, there may be no health risk associated with these nutrient deficiencies. Upgrading the lunches' nutritional quality to meet all the goals may be difficult and may not be feasible in all cases because attempts to improve nutrition may adversely affect participation, cost, and plate waste. A test of a computer assisted nutrient standard system of meal planning is being conducted to develop menus based on nutritional value of foods rather than the meal pattern. A review of program regulations called for in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 could have an important impact on the nutrient content of school lunches and on program goals. Offering high school students a greater food selection and improving the eating environment seem to increase program participation. GAO found less plate waste in programs using the fast-food format versus the conventional format and that offering a variety of foods from which students may choose helps to reduce plate waste. Having fast-food and salad formats, in addition to the conventional format in a lunch program, does not necessarily increase costs. However, school lunch costs in the school districts which GAO reviewed continually increased from school years 1976-77 through 1979-80. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should take a fresh look at Agriculture's one-third recommended dietary allowance (RDA) goal for school lunches and decide whether the achievement of some specified goal, such as one-third RDA, within acceptable limits of plate waste, cost, and student participation is considered unnecessary or impractical, and whether the goal should be dropped, and the program operated on the basis of providing a variety of foods within a specified meal pattern or some other achievable criteria. The Secretary should also decide whether the serving of lunches that will provide either one-third or some other specified percentages of the RDA's over time is considered important for students' nutritional well-being, and whether ways must be developed to ensure that the goal is essentially met within acceptable limits of plate waste, cost, and student participation.

116327

[*The Government Brain Drain*]. September 14, 1981. 7 pp. Testimony before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Civil Service and General Services Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the Comptroller General.

Organization Concerned: Office of Personnel Management.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs: Civil Service and General Services Subcommittee

Authority: Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Executive Salary Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act (P.L. 94-82).

Abstract: The Government brain drain caused by inadequate salary levels, irregular pay adjustments, and distorted pay interrelationships of top Federal officials is one of the most critical but perhaps least understood and appreciated problems facing Government today. Because of pay restrictions legislated by appropriation acts, Federal officials at seven different levels of responsibility now receive the same salary. Continuing the pay cap into October 1981 will extend the pay compression to an eighth level of responsibility. As effective management and operation of Government programs may be very critically jeopardized, Congress must face up to the pay compression and its related problems. Congress and the Office of Personnel Management have limited the maximum number of Senior Executive Service employees that could receive performance awards from 50 percent to 20 percent and have limited the size of bonuses that could be awarded. Cost-of-living pay increases have been denied also. Because of these restrictions, the turnover rate among career executives has increased dramatically; experienced executives at the peak of their managerial career are retiring early at alarmingly high rates; and the morale of the remaining Federal executives and senior managers is low. Pay compression also adversely affects the recruitment of senior executives and managers and creates incentives for agencies to use Senior Executive Service rank and performance awards as a secondary compensation system to reflect factors which should be reflected in basic salary levels. GAO strongly urges Congress to discontinue the appropriation restriction on payment of the scheduled salaries of top Federal officials and to allow cost-of-living adjustments to take place in at least the executive and judicial branches.

116372

[*Opinion Concerning the SBA Disaster Loan Program*]. B-202568. September 11, 1981. 10 pp.

Letter to Sen. David H. Pryor; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Small Business Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. David H. Pryor.

Authority: Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636 et seq.). Antideficiency Act (31 U.S.C. 665). Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553). 13 C.F.R. 123. 13 C.F.R. 123.3(a)(1). 13 C.F.R. 123.5(a). 13 C.F.R. 101.9. 58 Comp. Gen. 635. 58 Comp. Gen. 638. 40 Comp. Gen. 242. 40 Comp. Gen. 247. 44 Comp. Gen. 472. 44 Comp. Gen. 475. 46 Comp. Gen. 198. 46 Comp. Gen. 200. 46 Fed. Reg. 18527. 46 Fed. Reg. 18528. *Montei v. United States*, 440 F. Supp. 44 (D. Pa. 1977). *Dubrow v. Small Business Administration*, 345 F. Supp. 4 (D. Cal. 1972). *Capital Refrigeration, Inc. v. United States*, 375 F. Supp. (D. Pa. 1973). B-201706 (1981). B-164381 (1969). B-178704 (1973). B-181432 (1976).

Abstract: In March 1981, the Small Business Administration (SBA) found that its appropriation could not meet the requirements of its disaster programs for the remainder of the fiscal year. Excessive demands exhausted the funding apportioned to SBA which necessitated an immediate suspension of the approval of disaster loans until the apportionment of additional funds could be obtained. Effective March 19, 1981, SBA revised its regulations to provide that physical loss disaster loans to businesses would only be made to the extent that the required financial assistance is not available from private sources. The revisions also provide that physical disaster loans to businesses shall not exceed 60 percent of the actual physical loss resulting from the disaster. Generally, agencies charged with the statutory responsibility of administering a

Government program are accorded great deference with respect to the promulgation and interpretation of regulations implementing the program. The courts and GAO have recognized the broad SBA discretion under statutory provisions authorizing the SBA business loan program. Thus, it is clear that the SBA authority to issue and amend its regulations cannot be questioned, provided that the regulations adopted are not in conflict with any relevant statutory requirements. GAO believes that the amended regulations do not conflict with the underlying disaster loan legislation. There is nothing in the relevant statutory provisions or their legislative history that sets either a minimum or maximum percentage of loss that SBA is required to cover when approving a disaster loan. While legislation clearly allows SBA to approve disaster loans without having to take into consideration the availability of credit from other sources, SBA is not prohibited from taking this factor into account if it so chooses. Since prior regulations are no longer applicable after the revised regulations have become effective, SBA did not exceed its authority in approving loan applications on and after the effective date of the revisions regardless of when the applications were filed. SBA is legally prohibited from incurring obligations in excess of the total amount of available funds. Therefore, it was within its authority to suspend approval of disaster loan applications temporarily. GAO concurred with the SBA actions in this matter.

116388

[Reorganization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture]. September 17, 1981. 13 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee.

Authority: Food and Agriculture Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO discussed the recent reorganization of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) as it related to the USDA nutrition responsibilities and activities. In summary, the reorganization separates some of the USDA nutrition information functions from its nutrition research functions and decentralizes its human nutrition research activities by transferring nutrition research from its former, high-level, separate-agency status to one of the component research programs of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). With any changes in administration and reorganization, there is naturally some temporary disruption in operations because of changes in leadership, responsibilities, and reporting channels. It is natural that the people who are affected will have some concerns and fears and that speculation will arise about their jobs, activities, and the effectiveness of the reorganization. Some of the concerns of individuals inside and outside USDA are: (1) whether nutrition will be less visible and deemphasized; (2) how nutrition issues will be coordinated and integrated; (3) how nutrition information policies, programs, and strategies will be affected; and (4) whether nutrition research will continue to be supported under its new decentralized setup. GAO stated that, although nutrition will be less visible at USDA, this does not necessarily mean a lack of commitment to nutrition because there have been no cuts in the funding of nutrition research, education, and information programs. Under the reorganization, the nutrition research activities were decentralized, and some of the nutrition information activities were transferred to a newly established information service. Before the

reorganization, human nutrition research was separate and distinct from agricultural research. Under the reorganization, five human nutrition centers were transferred and placed under ARS. GAO concluded that, regardless of how nutrition is organized at USDA, it needs special attention and a national focus because it is primarily a national issue and not purely a regional one. Also, the new regional human nutrition research centers should be carefully monitored and guided as they progress toward developing and implementing their research programs. Finally, the nutrition research and information programs are critical because they provide much of the basis for the food and nutrition information used by the professional community and the mass media in providing information to the American people.

116406

Industry Views on the Ability of the U.S. Photovoltaics Industry To Compete in Foreign Markets. ID-81-63; B-204650. September 15, 1981. 2 pp. plus 9 appendices (179 pp.)

Report to Sen. Pete V. Domenici, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Energy Research and Development Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: Energy: U.S. Alternatives to Its Major Dependence on Oil From the Middle East (1635).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: Energy (270.0); Energy: Energy Supply (271.0); Energy: Energy Information, Policy, and Regulation (276.0).

Organization Concerned: Italy; Israel; Department of Energy; France; Federal Republic of Germany; Japan; Mexico; Department of State; Department of Commerce; Solar Energy Research Institute; Solar Energy Industry Association.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Energy Research and Development Subcommittee; *Sen.* Pete V. Domenici.

Abstract: As requested by the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy Research and Development, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, views are presented from over 30 companies and experts in the U.S. photovoltaics industry on the competitiveness of U.S. firms in foreign markets and the Administration's proposed solar energy budget reductions. Also presented is a brief description of the solar energy programs and activities of France, West Germany, Italy, and Japan, which are major competitors of U.S. companies in the world market.

116433

[Customs' Collection of Additional Import Duties on Mushrooms]. GGD-81-77; B-203065. May 15, 1981. Released June 22, 1981. 3 pp.

Report to Sen. John Heinz, Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs: International Finance and Monetary Policy Subcommittee; by William J. Anderson, Director, GAO General Government Division.

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Administration of Justice: Federal Law Enforcement Activities (751.0).

Organization Concerned: United States Customs Service; Bureau of the Census; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs: International Finance and Monetary Policy Subcommittee; *Sen.* John Heinz.

Authority: Presidential Proclamation 4801.

Abstract: GAO assessed whether the U.S. Customs Service made a mistake in a directive it issued to implement a Presidential Proclamation. Under the Proclamation, the duty on imports of canned and other prepared mushrooms was increased. It was believed that

a mistake may have been made which resulted in the additional duties not being collected. *Findings/Conclusions:* The Customs Service correctly implemented the Presidential Proclamation for import relief, and the additional duties for certain mushroom imports are being collected by Customs. Concern about the collection of the additional duties may have been caused by incorrect data published by the Bureau of the Census. Programing errors resulted in Census reporting the wrong duty for mushrooms for November 1980 through March 1981. Initially, Census officials inadvertently failed to program the November 1980 increased duty rate into their computer until January 1981. The programing errors have been corrected and all mushroom transactions during April and subsequent periods will reflect the correct data.

116436

[*Storage Cost Data on CCC-Owned Dairy Commodities*]. CED-81-157; B-204783. September 18, 1981. Released September 28, 1981. 5 pp. plus 3 enclosures (3 pp.).

Report to Rep. Donald J. Pease; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food (1700)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Donald J. Pease.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO obtained certain cost data on the federally owned dairy products from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). CCC is a wholly owned Government corporation which acquires commodities through price support and other programs. *Findings/Conclusions:* As of June 30, 1981, the CCC dairy inventories consisted of about 518 million pounds of butter, about 486 million pounds of cheese, and about 871 million pounds of nonfat dry milk. Nearly three-fourths of the dairy products in storage are less than 1 year old. For the first 9 months of fiscal year 1981, the Government's cost to store dairy products has risen sharply, totaling over \$24 million. By comparison, storage costs for fiscal years 1977-80, when inventories were lower, averaged about \$11 million annually. Relatively small quantities of these products are lost due to spoilage while in storage. However, some loss in quality or product deterioration can occur and, when it does, the products are sold at less than inventory value. Only nonfat dry milk is sold on a restricted basis.

116480

[*Information on Peanut Allotment Owners That Lease and Rent Away Rather Than Plant Their Peanut Allotment Quotas*]. CED-81-156; B-204751. September 21, 1981. 6 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Report to Sen. Richard G. Lugar; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Income (1729).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Richard G. Lugar.

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938

Abstract: GAO was requested to review the extent to which peanut allotment owners lease or rent away their allotment quotas. The objectives of the review were to: (1) determine the availability of certain information in records which the Department of Agriculture maintains on the peanut program; (2) determine the validity of the Department's estimate that 70 percent of the peanuts grown in the United States are produced using leased or rented allotments and quotas; and (3) obtain information on the occupations and

primary sources of income of the allotment owners who lease or rent away their allotment quotas. *Findings/Conclusions:* GAO found that county offices of the Department's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) maintain records on individual leases and rentals of peanut allotments; however, only those records on leases are summarized for internal agency reporting purposes. The ASCS records do not show the primary occupation or sources of income of the allotment owners. The Department's estimate that 70 percent of peanut allotment acreage planted is leased or rented is based on data obtained from a 1978 survey. The purpose of this survey was to obtain information on peanut production practices in selected growing areas. Because it was not a comprehensive study, not all peanut-producing States and counties were represented and only a small number of producers were contacted in the selected areas. Therefore, the data contained in the survey cannot be projected across the whole program. Data developed by GAO on the extent of peanut allotment leasing and renting in four selected counties indicated that a significant number of the allotment acres are leased or rented.

116485

Consumers Need More Reliable Automobile Fuel Economy Data. CED-81-133; B-203958. July 28, 1981. Released September 15, 1981. 26 pp.

Report to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Energy: Relevance and Usefulness of Federal Energy Information Programs (1639); Transportation Systems and Policies: Determining the Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Implement Motor Vehicle Fuel Economy Standards (2421)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Transportation: Ground Transportation (401.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Transportation; Federal Trade Commission

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Rep. John D. Dingell.

Authority: Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7525) Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act (15 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.). H. Rept. 96-948

Abstract: Since 1976, purchasers of new automobiles in the United States have relied on fuel economy test data to help choose fuel-efficient vehicles. Under a fuel economy labeling program administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with the Departments of Transportation and Energy and the Federal Trade Commission, every automobile manufactured for sale and use in the United States is required to display a label showing its tested fuel economy, its estimated annual fuel costs, and the fuel economy range of comparable vehicles. Since the program began, there have been complaints of discrepancies between the EPA fuel economy test results and consumers' reported on-road fuel economy. GAO was asked to determine why these discrepancies exist, whether better measures of fuel economy can be developed, and whether better ways of disseminating this information to consumers can be devised. *Findings/Conclusions:* Differences between the EPA figures and drivers' on-road mileage figures result from many factors including variances in travel environments, driver habits, vehicle conditions, and design changes. In addition to these factors, discrepancies which are caused either by the test procedures themselves or by automobile advertising have caused consumers to become increasingly skeptical of the program. EPA proposes to revise the fuel economy labeling program by, among other things, adjusting the test values to better represent the gas mileage consumers are obtaining on the road. Its proposal includes a plan to apply an adjustment factor to each automobile label value which would account for the average discrepancy

between the fuel economy test results and consumers' on-road data. Although manufacturers generally support this plan, some are concerned over how the factor should be calculated. Recent studies comparing the fuel economy test results with on-road experience indicate that separate adjustment factors may be required to reflect new automobile technologies. However, more research data are needed before any definite conclusions can be drawn on how changing technologies could affect the adjustment factors. Further, if proposed EPA revisions to the fuel economy labeling program become effective, education programs will be needed to adequately inform consumers of the program adjustments and limitations.

116487

Corps of Engineers' Acquisition of Fish Hatchery Proves Costly. CED-81-109, B-202666. September 18, 1981. Released October 1, 1981. 25 pp. plus 10 appendices (71 pp.).
Report to Rep. James J. Howard, Chairman, House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Land Use Planning and Control: Federal Land Acquisition, Disposal, and Exchange Laws, Policies, and Procedures (2357).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Crystal Springs Ranch Fish Hatchery.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; Rep. James J. Howard.

Authority: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (P.L. 85-624).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Corps of Engineers' purchase of the Crystal Springs Ranch fish hatchery in connection with the loss of steelhead trout due to dam construction on the lower Snake River. GAO reviewed the appraised value of the hatchery and whether the Corps should have considered contracting with private hatcheries to raise some of the fish. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO believes that the method used by the Corps to determine the value of the fish hatchery was deficient and that a more realistic value would have been approximately \$2 million less, especially when conversion costs are considered. For example, another trout farm sold in the area for about half of Crystal Springs' selling price. This sale included more water, more land, a processing plant, a feed mill, and other assets not included in the Crystal Springs sale. The production capability on which the facility's value was based was not adequately supported. Thus, the Corps should not have relied on the appraisal because it contained many technical inaccuracies. GAO also believes that the rate of return on the investment in the hatchery was understated. Because of the controversy surrounding the purchase price, the Corps should have had a second appraisal made and should have required that a technical evaluation of production capability be made as part of the appraisal process. Commercial hatcheries could raise trout at substantial savings to the Government, but the Corps would need authority to contract with commercial fish hatcheries to supply the fish in the Lower Snake River. The Corps also has some reservation about the commercial hatcheries' ability to provide a continuous, long-term supply of healthy fish in a timely fashion. **Recommendation To Agencies:** If it is feasible for commercial hatcheries to supply steelhead trout, the Secretary of the Army should direct the Chief of the Corps of Engineers to promptly develop and submit to Congress proposed legislation which would authorize the Corps to contract with commercial fish hatcheries in the Lower Snake River area for steelhead trout. The Secretary of the Army should direct the Chief of the Corps of Engineers to determine the cost effectiveness and capability of commercial hatcheries in the Lower Snake River area to raise

steelhead trout comparable in quality to those raised in Federal and State hatcheries. As part of its determination process, the Corps may want to have commercial hatcheries demonstrate their capability to raise steelhead trout. In future fish hatchery acquisitions where comparable sales are lacking, the Secretary of the Army should direct the Chief of the Corps of Engineers to require appraisers to obtain a technical evaluation to accurately determine the production capability of the facility, more information to support the capitalization rate and, if possible, accurate production records.

116517

Food in the Future--Proceedings of a Planning Symposium. CED-81-142. May 1981. 58 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.).

by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954

Abstract: GAO published the texts of remarks presented at its 1981 Planning Symposium on Food in the Future. Views of what is likely to be important in the next 18 months and beyond in food programs and food policy were presented.

116540

[Review of S. 1442]. B-204277. October 6, 1981. 5 pp.

Letter to Sen. Orrin G. Hatch; Sen. Richard G. Lugar; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Orrin G. Hatch; Sen. Richard G. Lugar

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, S. 1442 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO was requested to review S. 1442, entitled Food Safety Amendments of 1981, which is intended to revise and update the Nation's food safety laws. In conjunction with that request, GAO also reviewed issues relating to the Delaney Clause and alternatives to regulating food additives which may cause cancer. GAO concluded that Congress should examine the continued appropriateness of the Delaney Clause because of: (1) advances in the ability of analytical detection methods to identify substances at very low levels; (2) uncertainties about the human risk from low levels of carcinogens; and (3) the inflexibility that exists under current laws.

116564

Eliminating Contractor Inspections of Federal Water Projects Could Save Millions. CED-81-146; B-204349. September 29, 1981. 25 pp. plus 3 appendices (5 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: General Procurement: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1951); Water and Water Related Programs: Problems Impacting on the Timely, Efficient, and Economical Construction and Maintenance of Water Resources Projects (2509).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers; Bureau of Reclamation.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Reclamation Act (43 U.S.C. 371 et seq.). 4 Stat. 32.

Abstract: GAO reviewed three approaches to inspecting the construction of dams, powerhouses, and other Federal water projects: (1) contractor self-inspection with agency monitoring, used by the Corps of Engineers; (2) agency inspection, used by the Bureau of Reclamation; and (3) third-party inspection, occasionally used by both agencies. The objective of the review was to determine the most economical way of accomplishing inspection objectives for water projects. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO favors agency inspections over contractor inspections because they are considered to be more objective in ensuring contractor compliance with the quality controls established in agency designs and specifications. In addition, inspectors who are independent of construction contractors appear less production oriented and more concerned about project quality than contractor personnel. Third-party organizations can provide inspections that are independent of the construction contractor, but experience indicates that these inspections are too costly and administratively burdensome to be viable alternatives to agency inspections, except in limited circumstances. Past experience and several studies have demonstrated the ineffectiveness of contractor inspection requirements. Rather than improving construction quality while reducing Government inspections, the requirement has resulted in a duplication of inspection efforts and facilities, unnecessary paperwork, and increased administrative costs. **Recommendation To Agencies:** To help reduce costs and provide the quality control essential for activities involved in constructing dams, powerhouses, and other water projects, the Secretary of Defense should exempt Corps of Engineers' water project construction activities from the requirement for contractor inspections

116574

Special Estate Tax Provisions for Farmers Should Be Simplified To Achieve Fair Distribution of Benefits. PAD-81-68; B-204175. September 30, 1981. 55 pp plus 4 appendices (34 pp.)
Report to Sen. Robert J. Dole, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance; Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: New or More Efficient Sources of Revenue for the Federal Government (4056).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350 0); General Government: Tax Administration (803 1)

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means; Senate Committee on Finance; Congress; Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski; Sen. Robert J. Dole.

Authority: Tax Reform Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-455). Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981.

Abstract: GAO examined two provisions added to the Federal estate tax law by the Tax Reform Act of 1976 to help farm families retain farmland after the death of the owner. The provisions are, specifically, special use valuation and deferred and installment payment. The purpose of the review was to determine whether the provisions have been effective in promoting the stated congressional objective of reducing the number of family farms sold to pay estate taxes. The evaluation was conducted prior to enactment of the Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA) of 1981. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, while the provisions have reduced tax burdens on farm estates, they have not helped to halt the decline of family farming. Estate taxes appear to have little to do with decisions to sell family farms; GAO found no case in which estate taxes had prompted the sale of a farm. GAO concluded that: special use valuation is difficult to administer and comply with; its complexity has tended to restrict its use to wealthy estates, farm estates with substantial value in equipment and buildings benefit less than estates with land composing a greater share of the estates' value; and farmers in different regions of the country are not equally able to

take advantage of it. The use of the tax deferral provision does have merit, however, and its use would greatly simplify the assistance given to farm estates that incur an estate tax liability. However, ERTA lessens the need for the two special provision in the 1976 Act by allowing larger amounts to be left at death without incurring additional taxes. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should adjust the length of the postponement of payment or the interest rate that a farmer is charged. Congress should simplify section 2032A and its administration by substituting a simple exclusion of a fixed fraction of the farm estate. Congress should replace special use valuation with a simpler alternative

116602

[President's Thirteenth Special Message for Fiscal Year 1981]. OGC-81-18, B-200685. October 7, 1981. 4 pp
Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Budget Function: Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (990.2).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Social Security Administration; Federal Railroad Administration; Office of Management and Budget.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35; 95 Stat 699).

Abstract: The President's thirteenth special message for fiscal year 1981 was transmitted to Congress pursuant to the Impoundment Control Act. The special message proposed two new deferrals of budget authority totaling \$6.7 million and revisions of three previously transmitted deferrals. The Administrator of the Agency for International Development (AID) announced that program reviews showed that certain international food relief programs were not working and were wasteful and ineffective and, therefore, would be terminated or reduced. The terminations and reductions would allow AID to deobligate approximately \$28 million. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO was informed by an AID official that the amounts identified for deobligation were estimates and that the total deobligations in fiscal year 1981 would more nearly approximate \$60 million. Of this amount, approximately \$32 million involve funds from appropriations whose availability to AID now has expired. The remainder of the \$60 million involves funds that are available to AID until expended. Some of these remaining funds were not deferred. GAO identified a portion of these remaining funds that AID did not plan to obligate in fiscal year 1981. They should have been reported as deferred. GAO estimated that the total amount deferred was \$8,229,400. It is not certain how much of the funds available for obligation in fiscal year 1982, as well as additional amounts which may be deobligated, will be deferred in fiscal year 1982. AID and the Office of Management and Budget need to improve their efforts in identifying and correctly reporting future deferrals to avoid these problems. GAO reviewed the thirteenth special message and, except as noted, identified no additional information that would be useful to Congress in its consideration of the President's proposals and believed that the proposed deferrals are in accordance with existing authority.

116613

[Protest of Contract Award Alleging Nonresponsiveness]. B-202783. October 14, 1981. 3 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p).
Decision re: Unit Portions Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel

Organization Concerned: Unit Portions Inc.; Veterans Administration.

Authority: 58 Comp. Gen. 307 B-199180 (1981)

Abstract: A firm protested the award of a Veterans Administration (VA) contract to supply jellies, jams, honey, and syrup to a number of VA hospitals. The requirement was totally set aside for small businesses. The protester alleged that the awardee exhibited a pattern of using large business manufacturers on past contracts for the same items and that it will continue to do so on this contract. As proof of the allegation, the firm cited the awardee's bid, which offered to deliver the food at uniform prices nationwide. The protester contended that the awardee's intent to use a large business manufacturer required the rejection of its bid. The protester made the same allegations during the performance of the awardee's previous contract. VA conducted an investigation and found that, on a small number of deliveries, the awardee had used a large business manufacturer. VA demanded, and the awardee agreed, that it not use a large business manufacturer again. GAO held that a bidder's certification that it is a small business and that it will follow the applicable regulations is sufficient information for a contracting officer to find a bid responsive. GAO further held that a bidder's past conduct is a matter to be considered by the contracting agency, except in certain circumstances not present here. Accordingly, the protest was denied in part and dismissed in part.

116644

Stronger Enforcement Needed Against Misuse of Pesticides. CED-82-5; B-200588. October 15, 1981. 35 pp plus 4 appendices (61 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection (0900); Environmental Protection Programs (2200).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment; Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Health and Human Services; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Appropriations; HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Appropriations; HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.); Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and State pesticide programs to enforce pesticide laws and suggested ways to improve program activities. GAO also reviewed special pesticide registrations to determine if some of the problems identified in an earlier GAO report had been corrected. **Findings/Conclusions:** Although improvements have been made in recent years, GAO found that the public may not always be protected from pesticide misuse because EPA and the States: sometimes take questionable enforcement actions against violators, have not implemented adequate program administration and monitoring, and are approving the use of pesticides for special local and emergency needs which may be circumventing the normal pesticide registration procedures of EPA. Enforcement programs do not always protect the public and the environment because many enforcement actions are questionable or inconsistent, some cases are poorly investigated, State agencies often do not share the EPA enforcement philosophy, and most States lack the ability to impose civil penalties. The majority of States have improved their pesticide laws, purchased new equipment to upgrade laboratories, hired additional staff, and conducted more inspections. However, EPA and the States have not developed adequate management information to document pesticide enforcement activities. EPA monitoring of State programs has been limited and directed at

administrative aspects rather than evaluations of the adequacy of enforcement actions. There is a lack of quick and effective processing of misuse cases referred between EPA and the States and between EPA and the Food and Drug Administration because of inadequate recordkeeping systems, lack of followup actions by the referring agency, and untimely enforcement actions. New EPA reporting requirements are a first step in providing a basis for evaluating the quality of enforcement actions. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of EPA should require the EPA Registration Division, regional offices, and State offices to better coordinate experimental-use monitoring. This could include a requirement that requesters of experimental-use permits notify EPA regional and State officials when they actually plan to conduct their experiments. The Administrator of EPA should notify States that repetitive emergency exemptions will not be approved unless their justifications are fully documented. The Administrator of EPA should develop an information system which identifies emergency exemptions by State so that repetitive requests can be analyzed and reviewed for conformance with Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act guidelines. The Administrator of EPA should review each similar special local need registration to ensure that products or additional uses are being properly registered by the States. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), should improve management controls over referrals and strengthen coordination with EPA to help assure that investigations and enforcement actions are properly carried out. This could include requiring FDA to document pesticide misuse cases that it refers to EPA and establishing a system to monitor the status of cases referred. The EPA Administrator should strengthen coordination with the Food and Drug Administration and improve management controls over referrals to assure appropriate and expeditious investigations and enforcement actions. The EPA Administrator should establish standards for increasing the frequency and scope of onsite monitoring to assure State compliance with regulations and to evaluate the quality of investigations and enforcement action. The EPA Administrator should require EPA regional offices and States to improve recordkeeping and reporting systems so that accurate, complete, and timely data are generated and information on program results is provided. The Administrator of EPA should encourage the passage of State laws which provide authority for assessing civil penalties. This could include an outreach effort through the EPA regions with letters to State Governors and key legislators. The Administrator of EPA should take action to help the States improve the quality of investigations and enforcement actions. This could include providing additional inspection and enforcement guidelines. The Administrator of EPA should direct EPA regional office inspectors to emphasize the importance of conducting proper investigations and taking appropriate enforcement actions.

116650

AID and Universities Have Yet To Forge an Effective Partnership To Combat World Food Problems. ID-82-3; B-203211. October 16, 1981. 35 pp. plus 3 appendices (6 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630); Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Promote International Food and Agriculture Development Assistance (1730).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Board for International Food and Agricultural Development.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs; House Committee on Appropriations; Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Famine Prevention and Freedom From Hunger Amendments. Foreign Assistance of 1961 Advisory Committee Act (Federal) (5 U.S.C. App. 1), 22 U.S.C. 2220a. 22 U.S.C. 2220b. 22 U.S.C. 2220d. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

Abstract: The goal of title XII, the Famine Prevention and Freedom from Hunger amendment of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 is to improve and strengthen the involvement of U.S. land-grant and other eligible universities in solving developing countries' food problems. To assist and advise the Agency for International Development (AID) in achieving this goal, a presidentially appointed board, the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD), was established. GAO conducted a review to evaluate AID efforts to implement the provisions of title XII and to identify ways to improve AID/university ability to provide agricultural assistance to developing countries. **Findings/Conclusions:** In the nearly 6 years since the passage of title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act progress in expanding and improving U.S. university involvement in AID agricultural development activities has been slow. AID and the title XII community have yet to forge a partnership to fight world food problems. AID, BIFAD, and the U.S. university community efforts to improve university involvement in AID technical-assistance projects through such programs as strengthening grants, collaborative research, baseline studies, and other mechanisms, have yet to manifest better project performance abroad. University projects continue to experience costly and time-consuming delays which limit project results and detract from the quality of assistance provided. **Recommendation To Agencies:** To ensure that the AID sizable investment in strengthening grants meets a clear need and will be fully used, the Administrator of AID should include, as part of the planned 1982 evaluation of the grant program, a provision to assess the likely and appropriate level of AID utilization of universities in its program activities. The Administrator should consider incorporating the strengthening grant program as part of the proposed individual AID/university memorandum of agreements. The AID Administrator, in consultation with the Board of International Food and Agricultural Development, should improve AID/university implementation of title XII objectives by developing better means of preparing, orienting, and assisting university contract staff for overseas assignments. University contractors should: (1) receive a complete orientation on the unique, cultural, social, political, and economic characteristics of each foreign location; (2) be able to anticipate the expected or potential problems in working with foreign-country counterparts; (3) be aware of the AID method of operation in each location; and (4) be given adequate assistance to overcome administrative and logistical problems, such as clearing customs and obtaining adequate housing. The AID Administrator, in consultation with the Board of International Food and Agricultural Development, should improve AID/university implementation of title XII objectives by reviewing all current AID guidelines and instructions pertaining to U.S. universities and other title XII institutions, and developing consolidated guidelines in the AID operational and procedural handbooks and instructions which: (1) define title XII activities; (2) establish university procurement and contracting procedures; (3) lay out the operational roles and responsibilities of university contractors and missions on overseas projects; and (4) provide other necessary guidance to facilitate an AID/university working relationship. The AID Administrator, in consultation with the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development, should improve AID/university implementation of title XII objectives by issuing a policy directive clarifying the AID position on, and commitment to, implementing the title XII concept to combat world food problems. The policy directive should: (1) communicate the importance of, and establish the priority of, title

XII in relation to the overall AID agricultural development strategy; (2) specify the extent to which title XII mechanisms are to be emphasized in AID research and technical assistance; (3) delineate the Board role to assist AID operating units in carrying out these activities; and (4) be widely disseminated within the title VII community

116664

[Member Participation in Rural Electric Cooperatives], October 20, 1981. 5 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry: Agricultural Credit and Rural Electrification Subcommittee; by Baltas E. Birkle, Deputy Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-14, November 28, 1980, Accession Number 113925.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Organization Concerned: Rural Electrification Administration

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Credit and Rural Electrification Subcommittee.

Abstract: With Rural Electrification Administration (REA) assistance, rural electric cooperatives were formed to build and maintain electric distribution systems to serve their rural members. For the most part, the cooperatives purchased electric power from Federal power projects or electric companies and distributed it to consumers. As the distribution network expanded nationwide, the distribution cooperatives began to form member-owned generation and transmission or power supply cooperatives. Distribution cooperatives have boards of directors that establish policy for the system. The directors are elected by individual consumer/members. Individual consumer/members are free to make their opinions and concerns known to the board of directors at any time. Power supply cooperatives also have boards of directors that establish policy for the power system. They are typically selected directly by the directors of distribution system cooperatives. Because of concerns over energy costs, the environment, and conservation and because of the impact large generation and transmission facilities have on people's lives, there is a need to gain increased participation by individual members in the planning and decisionmaking processes of cooperatives. Unfortunately, consumer/member participation has been limited. As the cooperatives grew larger, there was a gradual lessening of direct member participation. The operations of the cooperatives were, for the most part, left to the staff and the boards of directors. GAO has recommended that REA require borrowers to take aggressive action to solicit the views and opinions of consumer/members in power supply planning and other major decisions. Power supply cooperative representatives could attend annual meetings of the distribution cooperatives and/or hold special meetings in areas served by the distribution cooperatives, and questionnaires or polls could be used to obtain consumer/member opinions

116686

Department of Defense Food Service Program Needs Contracting and Management Improvements. PLRD-82-3; B-205125. October 20, 1981. 24 pp. plus 7 appendices (33 pp.)

Report to Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary, Department of Defense; by Werner Grosshans, (for Donald J. Horan, Director), GAO Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Actions in the Food Processing and Distribution Sectors (1725); General Procurement: Assurance That Products and Services Actually Delivered by Contractors Are of the Quality Specified (1919).

Contact: Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division

Budget Function: National Defense: Department of Defense - Procurement and Contracts (051.2).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense, Department of the Navy; Department of the Army, Department of the Air Force.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations; House Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee.

Authority: DOD Directive 1338.10. OMB Circular A-76

Abstract: In view of the magnitude of the Department of Defense's Food Service Program and ever-rising food costs, GAO reviewed how well the program is working by visiting dining facilities at selected military installations. **Findings/Conclusions:** The Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services do not have an effective common means of measuring contracting cost and performance and comparing contracted operations between military services, bases of the same service, and dining facilities on the same base. GAO also found indications that the food cost index, which is the basis for the budgetary control device known as the basic daily food allowance, may be higher than necessary to provide the specified daily quantities of meat and beverages. This generosity and the "use it or lose it" mentality encourages lax food accountability and fosters waste and abuse. Daily head counts of the number of people being fed, multiplied by the allowance, results in funding available for the food service operations. GAO also found problems in controlling the head counts and stopping unauthorized persons from eating free meals. In addition, GAO found that the program had weak and ineffective top-level management and direction. Further, because the funds to run the program come from a variety of appropriations, the DOD accounting systems do not segregate and accumulate overall food service costs. As a result, total program costs are not available. DOD recognized this problem over 10 years ago; however, it still has not solved it. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Defense should develop and implement a management information system for the DOD Food Service Program that would include program costs, contract costs, and performance data. The Secretary of Defense should establish a functional budget and accounting category entitled Food Service within DOD and the military services for segregating and accumulating total costs for the DOD Food Service Program. The Secretary of Defense should take actions to improve the internal control over food inventories and only allow access to dining facilities by authorized people. The Secretary of Defense should require the development of a food cost index which is based on the actual items and costs of food used by military dining facilities. This would mean not starting with the value of the old ration, but developing a new cost index based on the food that is actually served, considering nutritional requirements, customer preferences, food utilization patterns, and economic factors. The Secretary of Defense should take appropriate actions that will remind contracting officers that comprehensive preaward surveys of potential food service contractors should be made in sufficient detail to reveal potential problem areas and to identify marginal or unsatisfactory past contractor performance. The Secretary of Defense should take appropriate actions that will reemphasize the need to consider recent past experience as well as anticipated major personnel changes in preparing the estimates of the number of meals to minimize unrealistic contract bids and proposals, unprogramed cost increases, and contractor claims and disputes. The Secretary of Defense should take appropriate actions that will provide for retaining adequately documented inspection records supporting contract payments long enough to enable contract administrators and auditors to verify that the Government received the services paid for. The Secretary of Defense should take appropriate actions that will require that the current DOD efforts in developing and testing improved food service contract methods provide for: (1) uniform statements of work for full food service, dining facility attendants, and food preparation; (2) common units of measure

(preferably the meal), (3) uniform meal volume adjustment formulas; (4) measurable performance standards; (5) inspection provisions requiring adequate documentation; and (6) equitable deduction rates for unacceptable contractor performance.

116701

Reforming Interest Provisions in Federal Water Laws Could Save Millions. CED-82-3; B-198376 October 22, 1981. 25 pp plus 4 appendices (10 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs. Financing, Cost Sharing, and Repayment Policies for Water Resources Projects and Programs (2508).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of the Interior; Water Resources Council; Bureau of Reclamation; Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Water and Power Resources Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Reclamation Act. Reclamation Extension Act. Reclamation Project Act of 1939. Omnibus Adjustment Act (Irrigation Projects). Water Supply Act of 1958

Abstract: The cost of financing the construction of Federal water projects for irrigation and municipal and industrial consumers has increased substantially since the first projects were built in the early 1900's. Because conditions have changed since repayment policies were established, GAO took a look at the full cost of financing water projects to determine whether expenditures can be reduced. **Findings/Conclusions:** By law, water project costs, with the exception of interest costs associated with irrigation and future municipal and industrial water supply, are to be repaid by the water users. Although the law has not required interest to be paid by irrigators, it has been required in part for municipal and industrial users. Water users have had difficulties meeting their repayment obligations. As a result, Treasury was required to fund water projects with additional revenue obtained through public borrowing. As a result, taxpayers are subsidizing the users by paying millions of dollars in interest costs related to financing this construction. Today, with high interest rates, the Government finds itself borrowing at an interest rate several times as high as the interest rate it charges those it lends money to. The difference is now paid by the taxpayer. The Government is not fully recovering its borrowing costs to fund project construction because the Reclamation Act and other Federal water laws specifically allow: financing construction costs without interest; using interest rates that do not reflect the Treasury's borrowing costs; using an interest rate in effect at the start of project construction for all subsequent interest charges rather than the interest rates in effect during each year the construction funds were spent; and permitting the use of simple rather than compound interest in negotiating repayment contracts. On four projects reviewed, GAO calculated more than \$667 million in taxpayer-provided interest subsidies. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should amend appropriate Federal laws, particularly the Water Supply Act of 1958, as amended, to ensure that municipal and industrial water users fully repay their share of interest costs. In amending the legislation, Congress should require the Secretaries of the Army and Interior to: (1) use interest rates, developed by the Treasury, for computing interest during construction and interest on the unpaid balance that more appropriately reflect the Treasury's cost of borrowing funds; (2) compute interest during

construction using the interest rates in effect during each year construction funds are spent; and (3) compute interest during construction on a compound rather than a simple interest basis. Where possible, these provisions should be applied to existing projects; for instance, where binding repayment contracts do not exist, when amending existing contracts, or awarding new contracts for future water sales. Congress should take a fresh look at the interest-free subsidy in deciding future water project authorizations

116769

[Repayment of Overpaid Cash-in-Lieu-of-Commodities Funds to Louisiana Youth Talent Promotion, Inc.]. CED-82-8; B-204609. October 14, 1981. Released October 30, 1981. 3 pp.

Report to Sen. Russell B. Long; by Baltas E. Birkle, (for Henry Eschwege, Director), GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-80-91, June 6, 1980, Accession Number 112517

Issue Area: Food: Improving Integrity and Effectiveness in Child Nutrition Programs (1723).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Louisiana Youth Talent Promotion, Inc.; Louisiana: Department of Education; Department of Agriculture; Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Russell B. Long.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined the circumstances, status, and the equity of a repayment plan to recover overpayments made to an agency sponsoring the Child Food Program in Louisiana. During fiscal years 1977 through 1979, the agency had received excess cash-in-lieu-of-commodity payments which are now being collected by the Louisiana Department of Education as monthly deductions. **Findings/Conclusions:** Following a GAO report concerning overpayments in the Child Care Food Program, the Food and Nutrition Service determined that the Louisiana Department of Education had overpaid program sponsors in the form of cash-in-lieu-of-commodity payments. Early in 1981, after overpayment collections began, the agency requested to have its monthly deductions set at a lower amount. The State Department of Education lowered the deduction to an amount that it believes is equitable, considering the total amount overpaid and the monthly reimbursement amounts. Food and Nutrition Service officials stated that the State Department of Education is being very reasonable in this case in that it is making monthly deductions to help ease the repayment burden of the agency. GAO could see no basis upon which to question the actions being taken.

116781

FDA Should Reduce Expensive Antibiotic Testing and Charge Fees Which More Closely Reflect Cost of Certification. HRD-82-11; B-203267. October 28, 1981. 30 pp.

Report to Richard S. Schweiker, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; by Edward A. Densmore, (for Gregory J. Ahart, Director), GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection: Protection of Users of Drugs and Drug Related Products Against Unnecessary Risk of Injury (0914).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Health and the Environment Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and

Related Agencies Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301). Color Additive Amendments of 1960 Kefauver Act (Drugs) Independent Offices Appropriation Act, 1951 (31 U.S.C. 483a). OMB Circular A-25, B-164031(2)(1969)

Abstract: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) certifies batches of antibiotics, insulin, and color additives. Certification involves the testing of batch samples for their compliance with established standards and the issuing of certificates for batches that pass the tests. GAO performed a review of these practices because a comprehensive survey of the FDA monitoring of prescription drugs showed that the current level of antibiotic certification was costly and may not be necessary. **Findings/Conclusions:** Although the current level of testing of insulin and color additives appears to be reasonable, GAO believes that FDA no longer needs to certify all batches of antibiotics. The level of antibiotic certification should be reduced because: (1) the annual rate of batches rejected from certification has historically been less than 1 percent; (2) the sample units submitted from a batch, and the testing units selected from a sample, may not necessarily represent the quality of the entire batch; (3) the batch certification program is expensive; and (4) FDA has available other less costly means of assuring the quality of antibiotics. Over the last decade, FDA has made numerous studies and proposals on changing the certification process, but has made few modifications to the process. One proposed change calls for a gradual exemption of most classes of antibiotics from batch certification, considering an increase in surveillance efforts and inspections of manufacturers' processes, and a requirement for some newly approved antibiotics to be temporarily certified. Funds derived from certification support activities not specifically related to the certification process. The agency, therefore, uses certification fees to fund some salaries and expenses which would continue even if the certification program was reduced or eliminated. If the program was reduced, other funds would be needed to support activities which are not related to certification now supported with certification fees. Insulin and color additive fees also support activities unrelated to their certification. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration to: (1) establish a more restrictive definition of "certification-related activity" to include only activities which are related directly or indirectly to the certification process; (2) absorb in appropriated funds staff positions determined not to be involved in antibiotic, insulin, and color additive certification; and (3) develop an accurate method for allocating staff time and cost to the certification program. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration to: (1) develop a strategy for reducing the level of antibiotic testing; (2) assure through selective certification and alternative means, such as inspections and postmarketing surveillance, that manufacturers continue to comply with the established standards for manufacturing antibiotics; and (3) periodically assess the need to continue batch certification of insulin and color additives.

116812

Suspension of Grain Sales to Soviet Union: Monitoring Difficult--Shortfall Substantially Offset. C-CED-81-1. March 3, 1981.

Released November 8, 1981. 3 pp.

Report to Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General. This is an unclassified digest of a classified report.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Maintain Strong U.S. Agricultural Commercial Exports (1731).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance. Congress

Abstract. On January 4, 1980, the President announced the suspension of grain shipments to the Soviet Union in excess of the 8 million metric tons of wheat and corn which the United States was committed to export by the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Grain Supply agreement. The suspension was directed at the Soviet Union's important feed and livestock sector, improved domestic availability of meat, milk, and eggs has been a major goal of Soviet planners. The Administration estimated that the suspension would have a substantial adverse impact on Soviet feed usage, numbers of livestock, and meat consumption. **Findings/Conclusions:** In the 1979-80 marketing year, the Soviet Union was able to substantially offset the suspension's impact by increasing grain imports from other countries; drawing down its carryover grain stocks; increasing imports of non-U.S. soybeans, soybean products, and substitute feeds; and increasing meat imports. It may have received some U.S. grain as a result of unauthorized transshipments through Northern European ports. Although the Federal Government has set up a monitoring program to identify illegal grain shipments to the Soviet Union, it is not feasible to closely monitor for possible unauthorized transshipments because of the interchangeability of grain, the relatively widespread availability of transshipment facilities, and limitations in staff resources and U.S. legal jurisdiction. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that the Soviet Union will import an amount of grain equal to its maximum import capabilities during the 1980-81 marketing year. Thus USDA believes that any decrease in livestock feed usage or meat consumption will be the result of a poor Soviet grain harvest in the 1979-80 marketing year and low carryover grain stocks. Since GAO recognized that the suspension was imposed for foreign policy and national security reasons, it had no comment on the continuation of the suspension.

116838

[More Vigorous Action Needs To Be Taken To Reduce Erroneous Payments to Recipients of AFDC]. GGD-82-15; B-205381. November 9, 1981. 7 pp. plus 2 enclosures (7 pp.).

Report to Marion S. Barry, Jr., Mayor, District of Columbia; by William J. Anderson, Director, GAO General Government Division.

Issue Area: Food: How Can the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program Be Improved (1722).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Purpose Fiscal Assistance: Other General Purpose Fiscal Assistance (852.0).

Organization Concerned: District of Columbia: Department of Human Services; Income Maintenance Administration; District of Columbia: Department of Human Services; District of Columbia; District of Columbia: Office of Corporation Counsel.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on District of Columbia; House Committee on Appropriations: District of Columbia Subcommittee; House Committee on the Budget; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Governmental Efficiency and the District of Columbia Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: District of Columbia Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Budget.

Authority: Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act (District of Columbia) (P.L. 93-198; 87 Stat. 774).

Abstract: The Income Maintenance Administration (IMA) in the District of Columbia's Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for administering the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program. GAO assessed the DHS efforts to reduce erroneous payments and concentrated on the AFDC program because it comprises the majority of the IMA workload. GAO examined the erroneous payment problem, including a review of selected AFDC case files, quality control reports, and overpayment reports. GAO also identified and evaluated the

effectiveness of DHS policies and practices to prevent or reduce the incidence of erroneous payments, including the DHS Special Initiatives Management System. **Findings/Conclusions:** IMA is aware of the causes of many AFDC erroneous payments and has developed a plan which, if implemented, could significantly reduce the error rate. However, slow progress in implementing the plan will probably make it impossible for IMA to reduce the current 11-percent rate to the federally mandated 4-percent rate by the end of fiscal year 1982. The IMA plan includes: (1) developing and implementing a workload planning system; (2) recertifying AFDC cases 3 months after application approval; (3) reviewing all AFDC cases not reviewed in the past 12 months; (4) developing and updating policy and procedures manuals; (5) implementing improved training and testing of eligibility workers, supervisors, and clerks; and (6) creating an Office of Management Systems. The District of Columbia has been lax in collecting overpayments and prosecuting welfare fraud to recoup money erroneously paid to recipients. Overpayments occur because of administrative errors by DHS workers and because of misunderstanding or willful deception by recipients. According to DHS personnel, requests for repayment are only made from persons who voluntarily sign restitution agreements. GAO found no evidence that welfare or AFDC fraud has been prosecuted in the District of Columbia since at least 1978. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Mayor of the District of Columbia should require the Director, Department of Human Services, to ascertain from the Office of the District Corporation Counsel the type of information needed to prosecute fraud and direct caseworkers to maintain complete and fully documented evidence. The Mayor of the District of Columbia should require the Director, Department of Human Services, to reemphasize to the staff the importance of reducing the error rate to the federally mandated 4 percent and take the necessary action to ensure that the Special Initiatives Management System plan is implemented without further delay. The Mayor of the District of Columbia should require the Director, Department of Human Services, to assign a high priority to developing and implementing procedures to immediately collect money erroneously paid to recipients who have the means to make restitution. The Mayor of the District of Columbia should direct the Corporation Counsel to develop and prosecute large dollar welfare fraud cases and publicize the results of those successfully prosecuted.

116852

[Implementation of the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act by DOE's Bonneville Power Administration]. November 10, 1981. 18 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Energy Conservation and Power Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Energy and Minerals Division.

Contact: Energy and Minerals Division.

Organization Concerned: Bonneville Power Administration; Bonneville Power Administration: Office of Power Management; Department of Energy.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Energy Conservation and Power Subcommittee.

Authority: Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act (P.L. 96-501).

Abstract: GAO reported on the manner in which the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is implementing the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act, which made BPA responsible for meeting the power needs of its customers in the least costly manner, establishing programs to conserve electricity, developing renewable energies, protecting fish and wildlife, and

encouraging public participation in the formulation of regional power policies. The Act mandated giving priority to cost-effective resources with first priority to conservation; second, to renewable resources; third, to generating resources of high fuel conversion efficiency; and fourth, to all other resources. The BPA actions to acquire resources must be consistent with the criteria for resource planning specified in the Act. GAO has found that BPA has been inconsistent in implementing the Act, and its organization does not yet reflect the purposes and priorities of the Act. BPA contracting to sell Federal power has been hurried and poorly planned, and the BPA approach to conserving electricity and developing renewable energies has been cautious. Because of these inconsistencies and an ineffective public involvement program, uncertainty exists as to whether BPA will be responsive to its new charter under the Act. The Department of Energy should study and update the BPA organization. Twenty-year contracts were used that were traditional but inappropriate, and BPA sold Federal power without assuring customer compliance with the Act. Under the Act, the BPA resource acquisition programs must give top priority to cost-effective conservation and renewable energies, and BPA is proceeding cautiously to acquire these priority resources. Restoration of anadromous fisheries on the Columbia River and its tributaries awaits the development of a plan.

116902

[The Packers and Stockyards Administration's Regulatory Reform Activities]. CED-82-11, B-204746 November 16, 1981. Released November 23, 1981. 6 pp.

Report to Rep. Wes W. Watkins; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Packers and Stockyards Administration; Department of Agriculture: Office of the General Counsel; Livestock Marketing Association; National Cattlemen's Association; American Farm Bureau; American Meat Institute; American Stockyards Association; National Farmers Organization; National Pork Producers Council.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Wes W. Watkins.

Authority: Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7 U.S.C. 181 et seq.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's Packers and Stockyards Administration's (P&SA) regulatory reform activities. GAO was particularly interested in the P&SA task force which was established in January 1981 to review and recommend changes in P&SA regulations and policy statements to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens on the livestock industry. GAO summarized the P&SA regulatory reform process and discussed the task force's recommended changes in four major areas: (1) bonding requirements, (2) custodial accounts, (3) trade practices, and (4) sales promotion programs. **Findings/Conclusions:** The Packers and Stockyards Act is intended to assure fair competition and fair trade practices in the marketing of livestock, meat, and poultry as well as meat and poultry products. P&SA administers the Act by regulating stockyards, packers, market agencies, and dealers engaged in interstate commerce. During its study, the P&SA task force sought input from various sectors of the livestock industry through meetings with various national organizations representing the industry. According to P&SA task force officials, many of the task force recommendations would not only reduce the regulatory burden on the livestock marketing industry but would update and streamline the regulations and policy statements and make them easier for the industry to understand and follow. The national organization representatives with whom GAO spoke were generally satisfied with the way P&SA was going about its regulatory reform activities. Currently, all dealers and market agencies are required to maintain or file a minimum \$5,000

bond. The task force recommended that small dealers be exempt from bonding requirements. Current P&SA regulations require market agencies selling on commission to reimburse custodial accounts for uncollected receivables after 3 days, which the task force recommended be extended to 7 days. The task force also recommended that the restrictions on trade practices regulations be consolidated and simplified and that the meat packer sales promotion programs policy statement be revoked primarily due to administrative costs.

116941

[Protest Alleging IFB Requirement Discriminated]. B-204303, December 1, 1981. 2 pp

Decision re: Triple P Services, Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Triple P Services, Inc.; Department of the Air Force: MacDill AFB, FL; Department of the Air Force: Myrtle Beach AFB, SC.

Authority: 52 Comp. Gen. 640, 52 Comp. Gen. 644, D.A.R. 10-104.2, D.A.R. 10-104.1(g) B-175458(2) (1972). B-195838 (1979).

Abstract: A firm protested the allegedly restrictive provisions of two invitations for bids (IFB) issued by the Air Force for food service attendants. The IFB's were totally set aside for small businesses. Specifically, the protest involved the requirements for performance bonds on the contracts. The protester requested the removal of the bond requirements from both solicitations. The firm did not bid, contending that it was a new, minority-owned, small business and that the bonding requirements made participation in the bid process impossible and, therefore, discriminated against new and small firms. GAO reviewed the record and found the protest to be without merit since a contracting officer has the discretion to determine whether a need exists for a bonding requirement. Additionally, the record showed that a total of 23 firms, all certified as small businesses, bid on the two solicitations. Thus GAO concluded that, despite the argument of the protester, the bond requirements did not discriminate against small businesses. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

116968

[Approval of the Design of the District of Columbia Government's Water and Sewer Billing System]. AFMD-81-115; B-204925, September 30, 1981. 2 pp. plus 1 attachment (2 pp.).

Report to Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., House of Representatives; Speaker of the House; George Bush, Senate; President of the Senate; Marion S. Barry, Jr., Mayor, District of Columbia; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting; Conformity With Comptroller General's Principles, Standards, and Related Requirements (2801).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems: Accounting Systems in Operation (998.1).

Organization Concerned: District of Columbia; Senate; President of the Senate.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton.

Authority: P.L. 94-399.

Abstract: The City Administrator of the District of Columbia requested that GAO approve the system design for the District government's water and sewer billing system. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the design is adequate and conforms in all material respects to the District's accounting principles and standards statement. To maintain an approved status, any planned

changes in the system design should be discussed with GAO and, if necessary, the changes should be submitted formally for approval. GAO suggested that the District's internal auditors periodically review the system in operation to assure that it is operating as prescribed.

116986

Better Collection and Maintenance Procedures Needed To Help Protect Agriculture's Germplasm Resources. CED-82-7; B-205547. December 4, 1981. 20 pp.

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-75, April 10, 1981, Accession Number 114908.

Issue Area: Food: Adaptability of the Food Production System To Maintain Productivity Under Changed Conditions (1728).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

Authority: Research and Marketing Act.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) storage, collection, and maintenance of germplasm, the genetic base of U.S. crops, to determine if the germplasm system adequately protects against catastrophic loss. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the system has numerous operational problems, primarily due to a lack of departmental attention and a low priority given to improving the system. Specific areas which contributed to the problems in collection, storage, and maintenance include: (1) insufficient information on who all of the germplasm curators are and what germplasm exists in storage or in its native environment; (2) insufficient planning to determine what genetic material for crops important to U.S. agriculture should be collected and stored; (3) curators who were supposed to provide permanent backup storage for the germplasm system had sent samples of only about 51 percent of the germplasm they held to the National Seed Storage Laboratory; (4) most of the storage conditions for the working collections were inadequate; (5) particular seeds were in short supply or very old, and this diminished their germination capabilities; (6) the small grains curator and some of the other working collection curators do not have testing equipment to identify when a sudden loss of viability occurs so that germplasm can be replenished; and (7) some curators are behind in replenishing germplasm that is in danger of losing its viability. GAO concluded that insufficient management attention by USDA to germplasm collection, storage, and maintenance has endangered germplasm preservation within the United States. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should initiate action to ensure that germplasm in the United States is stored adequately. This should include contacting all curators, both Federal and non-Federal, who store germplasm and determining whether or not they store the germplasm under adequate temperature and humidity controls and are using moisture-resistant containers. Those Federal curators who do not have adequate storage facilities should be required to improve their facilities to meet minimal acceptable conditions or move a sufficient amount of germplasm to storage facilities that can protect germplasm viability. Non-Federal curators should be encouraged to take similar action. The Secretary of Agriculture should initiate projects to implement backup

storage. This should include identifying all curators and their germplasm and comparing those results with the germplasm stored at the National Seed Storage Laboratory (NSSL). USDA should require Federal curators to provide germplasm for backup storage to NSSL and should require NSSL to ensure that its germplasm is also being stored with other curators. It should encourage similar action for non-Federal curators. The Secretary of Agriculture should take an accurate inventory of the small grains collection. This should include a physical comparison of germplasm in storage and on inventory records, taking appropriate actions to acquire missing germplasm. The Secretary of Agriculture should verify the need for germination testing equipment at all curator storage facilities. Because some of the curators do not work for USDA, the agency cannot require corrective actions by all curators. If such equipment is not available at non-Federal locations, USDA should encourage the curator to move some of the seed, enough to ensure its continued preservation, to a storage facility with germination testing equipment or arrange for periodic testing at a testing facility. The Secretary of Agriculture should determine the extent to which curators are behind in their germplasm grow-out programs. Following this assessment, needs should be ranked so that available assistance can be provided to ensure that germplasm most in danger of losing its viability is preserved.

117010

[Corps of Engineers' Benefit-Cost Computation for the Stonewall Jackson Lake Project]. December 9, 1981. 8 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee.

Authority: Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (Federal) (P.L. 92-500).

Abstract: GAO made a limited analysis of the benefit-cost computation for the Stonewall Jackson Lake Project, a multipurpose project being built by the Army Corps of Engineers to provide flood protection, water quality control, area development, water supply, and recreation benefits. Although originally estimated to be completed in 1976 at a cost of \$34.5 million, completion is currently estimated for 1987 at a cost of \$189 million. About \$40.5 million has been spent primarily on engineering, design, acquisition and clearing of land, and highway and utility relocations, but the actual construction of the dam has not been started. When the project was authorized, the initial benefit-cost ratio was 1.7 to 1. The fiscal year 1982 total benefit-total cost ratio is computed at 1.07 to 1. However, since fiscal year 1980, the Corps only reports in its annual budget request a remaining benefit-remaining cost ratio which for fiscal year 1982 is estimated to be 1.53 to 1. Recreation benefits account for 15 percent of the average annual benefits. The methodology for computing recreation benefits is an inexact science and, as a result, the estimates are judgmental. The Corps claimed water quality benefits of 47 percent of the average annual benefits. The method which the Corps used in developing this figure was ruled out as a substitute for point source pollution control by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments, and the water quality benefits are being challenged in a U.S. district court. Flood control benefits account for 29 percent of the average annual benefits. The damage surveys were based on estimated damage using a questionable construction cost index. Benefits attributable to increased water supply

were valued at 1 percent of the average annual benefits, but no agreement has been reached for the sale of the water. Area redevelopment accounts for 8 percent of the average annual benefits, but the Corps states that these benefits should be reduced by about \$178,000. The interest rate on which the benefit-cost analysis is based is currently under challenge in a U.S. district court. The benefit-cost ratio did not include \$26 million in estimated costs and related benefits for highway betterments and relocations.

117015

[*General Accounting Office Review of the Department of Agriculture's Grain Warehouse Examination Programs*]. December 10, 1981. 7 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-112, June 19, 1981, Accession Number 115548.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee.

Abstract: Comments were presented on the results of a review of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) grain warehouse examination programs. Grain warehouse bankruptcies over the past few years and the publicity given a few recent cases have heightened concern about Federal and State warehouse licensing and examination programs. USDA and at least 29 grain-producing States administer programs to ensure that producers and the Federal Government have safe storage for their agricultural commodities. The best overall and latest available data on past bankruptcies indicate that about 2 percent of the approximately 10,000 grain warehouses nationwide have gone bankrupt between 1974 and 1979. Most of the reported bankruptcies for which information was available were warehouses in business less than 5 years which had a capacity of less than 300,000 bushels. Certain weaknesses in Federal warehouse programs made it difficult to ensure that warehouses had a sufficient quantity and quality of grain to cover their storage obligations, the basic purpose of the programs as now structured. USDA agreed to require that warehouse receipts in warehouses under uniform grain storage agreements will be reconciled and that all financial statements will have to be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. GAO believes the grain elevator bankruptcy problem warrants further careful study and evaluation before major program and legislative changes are made. One overriding issue that GAO believes USDA should resolve before specific changes are decided on is whether the potential for future bankruptcies warrants significant expansion of Federal efforts. The answer to this question is currently unknown. Obtaining a reliable answer will require development of a sound predictive formula tailored to the grain warehouse industry. The technology needed to do so currently exists, and research in this area is underway. To ensure against unnecessary additional Federal costs and regulations, GAO believes the need for any major expansion of the current Federal effort needs to be justified on the basis of reliable evidence that a significant number of bankruptcies are likely to occur in the future.

117047

Regulation of Cancer-Causing Food Additives--Time for a Change. HRD-82-3; B-205531. December 11, 1981. 61 pp. plus 8 appendices (20 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921).

Contact: Human Resources Division

Budget Function: Health Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Congress; *Rep.* L. H. Fountain; *Rep.* Ike Skelton; *Rep.* Charles O. Whitley; *Rep.* James G. Martin; *Rep.* Thomas M. Hagedorn; *Rep.* William C. Wampler; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley.

Authority: Food and Drug Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Food Additives Amendment of 1958. Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2601). Color Additive Amendments of 1960 (P.L. 86-618). Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.). Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2051). Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 659 et seq.). Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 740 et seq.). Water Pollution Control Act.

Abstract: The Delaney Clause, incorporated into the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act by the Food Additives Amendment of 1958, requires the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban food additives which are found to cause or induce cancer in humans or animals as indicated by testing. GAO made a review to: (1) determine if modifications were needed to the Delaney Clause, and (2) present an overview of the social, scientific, and regulatory issues involving food additives that might cause cancer. **Findings/Conclusions:** The center of the controversy surrounding the Delaney Clause is the concept that no substance, in any amount, may be intentionally added to food if it has been shown to cause cancer. Tests to determine whether food additives cause cancer and statistical models to assess their risk to humans are available, but they have not yet been developed to the point where many experts totally accept their reliability. Most experts believe that the Clause should be changed but differ significantly on how to change it. Opponents of change argue that the Clause is the most effective way to deal with food additives that may cause cancer since not enough is known about cancer to allow their use. Twelve public opinion polls conducted over the past 10 years have shown that the public approves of the general policy of banning cancer-causing food additives. However, the public is opposed to a ban for specific substances like saccharin which have perceived benefits. Cancer-causing substances are regulated differently within FDA and among FDA and other Federal agencies. GAO believes that Congress should reexamine whether the Clause is still appropriate because of advances in the ability of analytical detection methods to identify substances at very low levels, uncertainties about the human risk from low levels of carcinogens, and the inflexibility of the current law. If the Clause were deleted, under the remaining legislation, a cancer-causing additive could be used if there was a reasonable certainty that no harm would come from its proposed use.

117094

Profiles of Older People. 1981. 24 pp.

Refer to HRD-79-95, September 20, 1979, Accession Number 110399; HRD-77-70, April 19, 1977, Accession Number 102119; HRD-78-19, December 30, 1977, Accession Number 104602; HRD-80-41, February 8, 1980, Accession Number 111501; HRD-80-83, May 23, 1980, Accession Number 112366; HRD-80-7, October 15, 1979, Accession Number 110594; HRD-80-8, October 15, 1979, Accession Number 110600.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Abstract: Three separate studies were made on the quality of life of people 65 years old and older not residing in institutions. The elderly persons sampled lived in Cleveland, Ohio; Lane County,

Oregon, and the Gateway Health district in northeastern Kentucky. During a personal interview, the elderly persons replied to 101 questions about their well-being in five areas of functioning: social, economic, mental, physical, and activities of daily living. Statistics were derived on the effects that aid has on older people, the current costs of helping older people, the long range benefits of helping the elderly, comparative costs of home services and institutionalization, living arrangements of the impaired, rural and urban comparisons, income sources of the elderly, sources of help for the elderly, and older people in public housing.

117165

[*Comments on Proposed National Export Policy Act of 1981*]. ID-82-4; B-203902. December 30, 1981. 1 p. plus 3 enclosures (17 pp.).

Report to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Effectiveness of U.S. Government Export Stimulation Programs (0620).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Export-Import Bank of the United States; Department of Commerce: Economic Development Administration; Small Business Administration; General Accounting Office; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.; Department of Commerce; Securities and Exchange Commission. **Congressional Relevance:** House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Rep. John D. Dingell.

Authority: Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-34). Foreign Trade Zone Act. Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977. Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. P.L. 90-390. H.R. 3173 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed a bill that would establish a national export policy for the United States. The GAO review encompassed the following topics: export financing, export-related tax policy, business accounting and foreign trade simplification, export competitiveness statements, export promotion programs, agricultural exports, and the GAO reporting requirement. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO stated that the sections of the bill dealing with export financing would attempt to do the following: (1) amend existing legislation concerning Eximbank's authority to finance exports with the intent of enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. exporters; (2) allow Eximbank to guarantee loans by private financial institutions when secured by accounts receivable or inventories; and (3) place stipulations on the allowable amount of Eximbank-provided financing for agricultural commodity exports. The sections on export-related tax policy would affect the taxation of Americans overseas and the use of foreign trade zones in exporting. The sections on business accounting and foreign trade simplification would amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, specifically the accounting and antibribery provisions. The section on export competitiveness statements provides for such a statement whenever a significant action could adversely affect the exports of the United States. The section on export promotion programs would encourage the formation of export trading companies and provide for the establishment of joint marketing agreements. The sections on agricultural exports would establish an agricultural export credit revolving fund. Finally, GAO believes that the section dealing with reporting requirements should be deleted because it would only provide for short-term examinations of the export policies of the United States.

117168

[*Agency Responsibilities To Keep Informed of Personnel Needs in the Food and Agricultural Sciences*]. CED-82-25; B-205854. December 28, 1981. 10 pp. plus 1 enclosure (2 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effects of Scarcity in Farm Input Resources (1726), Personnel Management and Compensation: Effective Use of Work Force Planning (0327); Science and Technology: Proper Federal Role in Developing and Maintaining Human Resources (2017).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture. Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Education and Labor; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations. Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) activities in carrying out the agency's responsibility to keep abreast of personnel needs in the food and agricultural sciences. The objective of the review was to assess how well USDA fulfilled its duties as defined in the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the USDA Office of Higher Education worked with university representatives to identify issues and concerns related to the need for graduates in the food and agricultural sciences, including the development of supply/demand analyses. GAO believes that USDA needs to interact with industry and Federal agencies which use food and agricultural science personnel and obtain their input on personnel requirements. Interaction and input is necessary if USDA is to obtain a complete and up-to-date profile of the supply/demand picture and manpower development requirements for food and agricultural science industry personnel. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Office of Higher Education to interact with a cross-section of organizations, Government agencies, industry, and universities that employ graduates trained in food and agricultural related sciences.

117182

[*High Food Prices in the Virgin Islands*]. CED-82-23; B-205808. December 16, 1981. 5 pp. plus 4 enclosures (6 pp.).

Report to Del. Ron De Lugo; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Action To Improve Efficiency in Food Marketing (1740).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Labor; Office of Personnel Management.

Congressional Relevance: Del. Ron De Lugo.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1964.

Abstract: GAO was asked to determine actual food price differences between the Virgin Islands and other locations such as Washington, D.C.; southwest Florida; and Puerto Rico. GAO was also asked to determine whether any such differences have increased or decreased in recent years. GAO obtained and analyzed food price data from three different sources: the Bureau

of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). **Findings/Conclusions:** Each source used a different approach to assembling and analyzing its data, and these differences were reflected in the results. The results generally indicated that food prices are higher in the Virgin Islands than in Washington, D.C., southwest Florida; and Puerto Rico. The amounts of the differences depended on the data gathered and the approaches used. Using different sets of data, Virgin Islands food prices ranged from 26 to 56 percent higher than food prices in Washington, D.C., and the price differences between the two areas have generally increased in recent years. None of the approaches used indicated changes in food prices in relation to changes in income or any other indicator. BLS measured specified units of measurement of 61 food items in various food outlets in Washington, D.C.; the Virgin Islands; and southwest Florida. This analytical approach is affected by the items and food outlet selected and the absence of items being weighted by importance. USDA measured 11 groups of food items defined as necessary to provide a nutritional diet. This was probably the best of the three approaches. However, it had a static base and did not reflect changes in individual food habits. The cost-of-living index used by OPM includes food items which closely resemble what many U.S. households buy but provides no comparison other than from each location to Washington, D.C.

117211

[*Contract Award Protests*]. B-204106, B-204382. January 4, 1982. 4 pp.

Decision re: Integrated Forest Management, Inc.; by Harry R. Van Cleve, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Integrated Forest Management, Inc.; Forest Service: Six Rivers National Forest, CA.

Authority: Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). 36 C.F.R. 219.5. F.P.R. 1-1.301-1. B-194247 (1979). B-198521 (1980). B-192361 (1981). B-199690 (1981).

Abstract: A firm protested the award of two Forest Service contracts, contending that the solicitation's requirement for aerial application of herbicides was unduly restrictive of competition because deforestation can be accomplished manually without using herbicides and at a cost savings to the Government. The protester contended that the requirement precluded local manual contractors from competing for the contracts in violation of Federal environmental and procurement laws. The Forest Service contended that it had considered four alternatives for the project which included hand cutting and had determined that the aerial application of herbicides was the preferred alternative because it had a wider spread and longer lasting effect than alternative methods. The agency argued that the specifications complied with Federal procurement regulations and environmental law and that the protester's bid demonstrated that aerial spraying was as cost effective as manual spraying. A contracting agency is accorded broad discretion in determining its needs. Since the protester failed to show that the solicitation's requirements were clearly unreasonable, GAO found no objection to the solicitations or the awards and denied the protest.

117241

Environmental, Economic, and Political Issues Impede Potomac River Cleanup Efforts. GGD-82-7; B-202338. January 6, 1982. 113 pp. plus 10 appendices (46 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Intergovernmental Policies and Fiscal Relations: Intergovernmental Fiscal Interaction and Problems (0407); Environmental Protection Programs: Social and Economic Effects on the Public and Private Sectors (2209).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0)

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Environmental and Consumer Protection Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Environmental Pollution Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Water Pollution Control Act. 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the difficulties state and local governments and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have experienced over the past decade in implementing water quality programs in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. GAO selected the D.C. area for a case study concerning federally mandated water quality programs because many of the problems identified in this report are similar to those occurring in many other areas. The study cites three areas which have been created as a result of the difficulties of the past 10 years: (1) the program has been much more costly than originally expected and current federal, state, and local fiscal constraints raise significant concerns regarding the affordability of water quality standards; (2) meeting environmental standards creates a problem of sludge disposal which has not yet been satisfactorily resolved; (3) the need for the rigorous water quality standards of the existing programs and the public benefits to be derived by additional investment to meet the standards have not yet been shown. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO supports substantive changes in the planning and siting of wastewater treatment and residues management facilities. Given the enormous costs of water pollution control programs and the impact that siting of wastewater treatment plants and residues management facilities have on the program's economic and environmental effectiveness, a regional approach to water quality planning is desirable. Some local prerogatives must be sacrificed, and effective organizations for planning and implementing regional solutions must be created with responsibility and authority to make and implement decisions. Federal, state, and local environmental agencies must consider their decisions on a comprehensive basis by assessing the trade-offs among the various programs and the impacts on the air, water, and land. GAO believes that EPA and state and local governments must give greater consideration to regional approaches to these problems allowing for more comprehensive and more achievable programs benefiting the economic and environmental factors involved. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should, in considering reauthorization of and amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, retain the essential design of the act's regional planning provisions. Congress should also reemphasize that the Environmental Protection Agency requires, as necessary, regional planning and program implementation mechanisms for metropolitan areas as a prerequisite for them to obtain federal water quality project grants. Congress should consider alternative approaches if it determines that the recommended optimal regional approach is not acceptable. These include: (1) requiring the Environmental Protection Agency to become a more active participant; and (2) eliminating regional planning as a federal requirement, including federal funding for such planning, and assessing projects on a case-by-case basis using as criteria available alternatives within the applicant jurisdiction's boundaries. Congress should consider placing more emphasis on a cost/benefit approach in funding advanced wastewater treatment projects.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator of EPA should ascertain how the agency can manage its programs in a more integrated manner and make recommendations to Congress on what, if any, legislative changes may be required. The Administrator of EPA should renew earlier priority efforts to establish and issue regulations for the distribution and marketing of sewage sludge products. The Administrator of EPA should undertake a more active role in assisting local jurisdictions in finding suitable methods for disposing of their sewage sludge and leading them through the regulatory maze to ensure they can be implemented. The Administrator of EPA should approve no treatment plant upgrading or expansion without first having an approved program for disposing of the resulting increased sludge volumes. The Administrator of EPA should fund no new planning efforts for wastewater treatment plants or related projects in metropolitan areas where regional approaches are needed until involved state and local governments have developed the institutional mechanisms needed to ensure thorough regional assessments of alternatives and implementation of resulting recommendations.

117247

[Agreement Between HHS and USDA To Finance the Construction and Renovation of Rural Health Centers Is Improper]. HRD-82-27; B-200888. January 7, 1982. 8 pp.

Report to Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Health and the Environment Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to HRD-81-63, June 15, 1981, Accession Number 115488.

Issue Area: Health Programs: Appropriate Numbers of Health Facilities (1217); Domestic Housing and Community Development: Effectiveness of the Nation's Comprehensive Rural Development Policy (2120)

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health Health Care Services (551.0); Community and Regional Development: Community Development (451.0); Health: Health Planning and Construction (551.3).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Rep. Henry A. Waxman; Sen. Orrin G. Hatch.

Authority: Public Health Service Act (P.L. 94-63).

Abstract: GAO reviewed a 1978 agreement between the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture for financing the construction and renovation of rural health center facilities using Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) loans. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO concluded that the repayment of FmHA loans for new construction with grant funds awarded under the Public Health Service Act was improper, constituted a circumvention of statutory restrictions, and should be discontinued. The Act states that grant funds may be awarded for projects to plan, develop, and operate community health centers and may include the cost of acquiring and modernizing existing buildings. The Act does not authorize projects for the erection or expansion of health facilities. After the agreement was executed, the HHS Office of the General Counsel stated that grant funds under the Act could be used to pay the costs of amortizing the principal of and paying the interest on loans undertaken for the construction of health facilities for eligible projects as part of the operating costs of those projects. GAO reviewed the loan agree-

ment and found that HHS does not have the authority to use the grant moneys to fund construction of new buildings whether such funding is done directly or indirectly for the repayment of construction loans. GAO believed that the effect of the agreement was to make the funds available, indirectly, to finance construction and thereby circumvent the statutory restriction. Previously, GAO has recommended that HHS reevaluate the eligibility of existing grantees and phase out those that cannot be justified. GAO did not believe that any useful purpose would be served by withdrawing support in locations where facilities are needed and justified. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Health and Human Services should stop supporting new loans for construction under the HHS/Agriculture loan agreement. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should discontinue support of all loans for health center projects where construction has not started. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should withdraw support for projects completed or underway where facilities are not needed and, to the extent appropriate, work with the Farmers Home Administration to find other uses for the facilities. A determination of need should be made during the process of implementing the recommendation in an earlier GAO report.

117255

[Need For Meals: A National Perspective]. November 10, 1981. 12 pp.

Speech before the Gerontological Society; by William F. Laurie, GAO Field Operations Division: Regional Suboffice (Cleveland).

Contact: Field Operations Division: Regional Suboffice (Cleveland)

Organization Concerned: Gerontological Society.

Authority: Social Security Act.

Abstract: GAO made estimates of elderly persons' need for meals, using three data bases of samples of older people in Oregon, Ohio, and Kentucky. The data for the analyses came from three studies that included information about people 65 years of age or older not residing in institutions. Using these urban and rural data bases, GAO grouped older people into categories which included those who: (1) may need meals because they have a low income; (2) are unlikely to use meals because they are physically and financially able to satisfy their own needs; (3) are receiving help from other sources, but who could transfer their source of meals; (4) are unable to use meals; and (5) probably need meals. Depending on whether the person lived in an urban or rural area, was male or female, or his age category, significant differences existed in the likelihood of the category into which an elderly person would fall. GAO found that many older people not in institutions could use meals. In 1980, 10.1 million people probably needed meals. The estimated cost of these meals was \$5.3 billion annually. The elderly also received \$2.4 billion worth of meals from the assistance of family, friends, and public and private agencies. Fifty-two percent of the estimated total for food assistance needed would be incurred for older people with annual incomes under \$3,000.

117260

Informing the Public About Food--A Strategy Is Needed for Improving Communication. CED-82-12; B-198417. January 8, 1982. 20 pp. plus 8 appendices (52 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; Richard S. Schweiker, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; James C. Miller, III, Chairman, Federal Trade Commission; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-80-89, April 21, 1980, Accession Number 112117; and CED-81-27, November 7, 1980, Accession Number 113759.

Issue Area: Food: Adequacy of Nutrition Education and Information Programs (1718).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0); Health: Health Research (552.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services; Federal Trade Commission.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health, Education and Welfare Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Education and Labor; House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Environmental and Consumer Protection Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.*

Abstract: Consumers need concise, clear food information as more food products come on the market and inflation drives food prices up. Food information, regulations, and programs have multiplied rapidly in the past decade. Some believe that the information resulting from these efforts is conflicting, confusing, and duplicative. GAO made a review to expand on its earlier suggestion that a cooperative undertaking was needed to develop a national food information strategy, which would include a system for performing research on foods and educating consumers. **Findings/Conclusions:** The federal government has developed a wide array of regulations and programs to control food labels and to encourage and teach good food buying, storage, and preparation habits. GAO has identified over 125 federal food data-gathering and information dissemination programs. There has been a heightened awareness of food issues, a safer food supply, and more coordination among federal agencies with food information programs. However, lack of a national food information strategy has allowed programs and regulations to be developed piecemeal, so that they are sometimes inconsistent; based on inadequate data; and formulated without integrating the research, education, and communication components of the food information system. The United States could learn from steps which other nations have taken to improve their food information systems. Three federal agencies have proposed requiring that food labels contain certain information without proper assurance that consumers need or would use the information. In 1980, GAO suggested that the proposal should not be implemented but that an overall food information strategy be developed cooperatively by a committee of representatives from the government, industry, academia, and consumer groups. Food experts also feel that a consortium of key federal officials should be established to pool their expertise and develop a national plan that would define U.S. food information needs and communication methods, provide additional scientific information on controversial issues, and evaluate existing programs. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission should jointly develop and submit to concerned congressional committees and the President a strategy for improving the communication of food information to the public. The strategy should incorporate the views and ideas of the various food groups expressed in this report.

117261

[President's Fifth Special Message for Fiscal Year 1982], OGC-82-5; B-205053. December 23, 1981. 3 pp.

Report to Congress; by Harry R. Van Cleve, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Budget Function: Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (990.2).

Organization Concerned: Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Transportation.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (31 U.S.C. 1402(b)). Supplemental Appropriations and Rescission Act, 1981. H. Rept. 97-260. B-202476 (1981).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the President's fifth special message for fiscal year 1982, which proposed one rescission of budget authority totaling \$20.4 million and nine deferrals of budget authority totaling \$132 million. The President proposed a rescission of \$20.5 million from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's funds. **Findings/Conclusions:** The funds proposed for rescission are not currently being withheld because the funds are fiscal year 1983 advance appropriations not yet available to the Corporation. Therefore, there was no violation of the Impoundment Control Act. The conference report on a Continuing Resolution stated that the amount appropriated for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is intended to maintain current levels of participation and that any reduction in allocations to States would be contrary to the Continuing Resolution. The Department of Agriculture reported that the funds made available to the WIC Program under the Continuing Resolution plus unobligated funds carried over from fiscal year 1981 are sufficient to maintain participation in the Program at the September 30, 1981, level. Except as noted, GAO identified no additional information that would be useful to Congress in its consideration of the President's proposals and believed that the proposed deferrals are in accordance with existing authority.

117293

[Distribution of Funds to Oregon Counties], B-203771. January 13, 1982. 5 pp.

Decision re: Bureau of Land Management; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Land Management.

Authority: Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.). Taylor Act (Grazing) (43 U.S.C. 315 et seq.; 48 Stat. 1269). P.L. 95-74. P.L. 95-465. P.L. 96-126. P.L. 96-514. H. Rept. 94-1163. H.R. 13777 (94th Cong.). 43 U.S.C. 1181a et seq. 50 Stat. 874. 91 Stat. 285. 92 Stat. 1279. 93 Stat. 954. 94 Stat. 295.

Abstract: GAO was requested to determine whether funds received by the United States as fees for grazing livestock on public lands, which were being held in a suspense account in the U.S. Treasury, may be distributed to the counties in which these public lands are situated in accordance with the formulae set forth in prescribed legislation. The suspense account was created in 1976 because a conflict apparently existed between a 1976 act and previous legislation. Because the 1976 act explicitly provides that, in the event of a conflict between it and prior legislation, the earlier acts will prevail, GAO held that the funds in the suspense account could be distributed in accordance with the formulae set forth in the earlier legislation.

117321

Do Aged Medicare Patients Receive More Costly Routine Nursing Services: Evidence Inconclusive, HRD-82-32; B-206026. January 20, 1982. 32 pp. plus 10 appendices (84 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Health Programs' Effectiveness of Health Care Regulations, Reimbursement Policies, and Utilization Control Program (1223).

Contact: Human Resources Division

Budget Function: Health: Health Care Services (551.0).

Organization Concerned: Health Care Financing Administration; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). Social Security Amendments of 1972 (P.L. 92-603). S. Rept. 97-139. S. 1377 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: Many in the hospital industry maintain that elderly patients require more daily routine nursing services than other hospital patients. Based partly on this, Medicare pays a routine nursing salary cost differential. GAO analyzed existing studies relating to the existence and size of the routine nursing salary cost differential and proposed a methodology that it would use if asked to make such a study. **Findings/Conclusions:** None of the studies which GAO identified adequately supported the existence of an industrywide routine nursing salary cost differential and GAO believes that evidence tends to be against the existence of such a differential. If GAO were to attempt to determine the existence and size of an industrywide nursing differential, it would conduct a work-sampling study in routine nursing care units in a nationwide sample of hospitals. The study sample would consist of 90 hospitals grouped into four strata on the basis of reported routine nursing salary costs. The sample would be weighted toward large hospitals with a high proportion of Medicare patients. GAO would collect data on the first 30 hospitals in the study and would use the data to estimate required sample size before continuing the study. If the sample size required was substantially higher than 90, GAO would reconsider whether the study should proceed. GAO would have the nursing staff observed and would record their activities. These data would be combined with hospital records to determine the average cost of routine nursing for the aged and the non-aged. GAO estimates that such a study would cost about \$8.3 million. GAO believes that a much larger sample at a significantly higher cost would be necessary to permit a reliable estimation of the influence of hospital size and patient characteristics on the size of any differential.

117335

Information On California Delta Water Quality Standards. CED-82-30; B-205884, January 18, 1982. 10 pp.

Report to Rep. Charles Pashayan, Jr.; Rep. Tony Coelho; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Financing, Cost Sharing, and Repayment Policies for Water Resources Projects and Programs (2508).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Reclamation; California.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Charles Pashayan, Jr.; Rep. Tony Coelho.

Abstract: GAO was asked: (1) how much Central Valley Project (CVP) water would be used as a result of a decision to voluntarily meet California water quality standards, if the decision is permanently implemented; (2) who the potential beneficiaries from using CVP yield to assure California Delta water quality would be; (3) who would pay for the depletion of CVP yield; and (4) how much the depletion would cost CVP users in potential lost revenues for project repayment. **Findings/Conclusions:**

According to Bureau of Reclamation and California water officials, implementing the decision would use about 800,000 acre feet of CVP water annually. On the other hand, a new agreement currently being negotiated between Federal and State water project officials, which includes meeting the new standards, could increase CVP yield by about 1.1 million acre feet. This increase results primarily from technical and other adjustments in the agreement. However, before the Bureau can sign the new agreement, Congress must authorize meeting the water quality standards as one of the purposes of CVP. The primary beneficiaries of the decision will be Delta municipal and industrial water users, agriculture, and fish and wildlife. They will benefit because improved water quality contributes to increased crop yield, more productive manufacturing processes, better drinking water, and an improved fish and wildlife environment. The water will contain fewer chlorides and dissolved solids. Yield depletion will be paid for either by current CVP users or the taxpayers, depending on whether the water quality standards are imposed for enhancement or mitigation purposes. State officials contend that the standards primarily mitigate the project operations' impact, while Federal officials contend that the standards provide enhancement to the water quality and, thus, should be nonreimbursable. The Bureau estimates that the loss of revenues to be anticipated in meeting the standards would range from zero to \$2 million annually, depending on how the issue of mitigation or enhancement is settled.

117346

Millions Could Be Saved by Improving Integrity of the Food Stamp Program's Authorization-To-Participate System. CED-82-34, B-205033. January 29, 1982. 14 pp.

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: How Can the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program Be Improved (1722).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-249). Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981 (P.L. 97-98).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's use of the Authorization-to-Participate (ATP) system, the Food Stamp Program's principal benefit-delivery method. The purpose of the review was to make a preliminary assessment of the Food and Nutrition Service's efforts to ensure the integrity of the system which will deliver about \$8 billion of the estimated \$10.6 billion of food stamp benefits in fiscal year 1982. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the ATP system has serious weaknesses. While losses through the system have been reported to be about \$12 million annually, the inaccurate and incomplete reconciliation reports submitted by some food stamp agencies and the lack of reconciliation reports by others indicate that actual losses are greater. As a result, the Food and Nutrition Service does not know the full extent of the losses. Moreover, it has opted to assume the fiscal liability of these losses when in fact some could have been prevented by food stamp agencies. The Service has

issued regulations requiring the use of photo identification at all food stamp projects. The new regulations also limit ATP card replacements, but duplicate transactions may still occur. GAO found that not all food stamp agencies that have serious ATP problems are required to use photo identification under the current criteria. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Acting Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service to take specific measures to improve the Authorization-to-Participate (ATP) system's fiscal integrity, including: (1) determining those elements of existing ATP delivery systems which are most effective in preventing program losses and direct that the more effective methodologies be used where appropriate; (2) verifying data on the reconciliation reports by reviewing food stamp agencies' ATP issuance and reconciliation systems and records, identifying through these reviews food stamp agencies that may be more likely to have recurring duplicate ATP transactions, and analyzing these weaker systems and requiring the food stamp agencies to correct flaws contributing to program losses; (3) requiring photo identification at all food stamp agencies experiencing significant duplicate ATP transactions but not currently covered by the regulations; (4) including enforcing program regulations making states and local food stamp agencies liable for program losses that should have been prevented; and (5) including reevaluating the new ATP replacement regulations to determine if weaknesses in the regulations can be eliminated.

117437

[*Letter of Inquiry on AID Agricultural Research Activities*]. February 3, 1982. 4 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Samuel W. Bowlin, Associate Director, GAO International Division.

Refer to ID-82-3, October 16, 1981, Accession Number 116650; and ID-79-13, February 12, 1979, Accession Number 108656.

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Agency for International Development: Board for International Food and Agricultural Development; Agency for International Development: Technical Program Committee for Agriculture.

Abstract: GAO surveyed the agricultural research activities of the Agency for International Development (AID). Prior reports and studies by GAO, the AID Bureau for International Food and Agricultural Development, and the AID Technical Program Committee for Agriculture highlighted problems relating to agricultural research and made recommendations for improving AID agricultural research activities. The current survey shows, however, that many of these problems still exist. In particular, AID needs to: (1) develop an integrated research strategy; (2) identify and classify research; (3) place greater emphasis on research relevance, quality, and use; and (4) have more agriculturally trained staff members. GAO asked for AID comments and information on specific action planned to address these problem areas.

117438

[*Computation of Cost-of-Living Allowances for Federal Employees in Nonforeign Areas Could Be More Accurate*]. FPCD-82-25, B-205580. February 8, 1982. 6 pp.

Report to Donald J. Devine, Director, Office of Personnel Management; by Clifford I. Gould, Director, GAO Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0351).

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Central Personnel Management (805.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Office of Personnel Management; Department of State.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; Treasury-Postal Service and General Government Subcommittee; House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Compensation and Employee Benefits Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Civil Service and General Services Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the methodology used by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Departments of State and Defense (DOD) to compute cost-of-living allowances (COLA's) for Federal personnel. Concerns have been raised by Federal personnel about the appropriateness of that methodology. **Findings/Conclusions:** COLA programs are administered by OPM for Federal civilian employees stationed in nonforeign areas outside the conterminous United States; by State for Federal civilian employees in foreign areas; and by DOD for uniformed personnel in foreign and nonforeign areas. GAO wanted to identify and analyze inconsistencies in the administration of COLA programs and to find ways of improving methodologies for the computation of COLA's. GAO found that Federal agencies are not using scientific survey procedures to collect information for COLA computation and, for that reason, it questions the accuracy of the data used. A particular problem is the timelag between when price surveys are taken and when the data are used by the agencies to compute base area prices. GAO also noted that OPM computation would be improved if sale prices were included in computation data in areas where the sale price is the normal price paid for certain goods. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Director, OPM, should weight sale prices to reflect the proportion of purchases made at sale and regular prices. The Director, OPM, should require agencies to use a scientific sampling system to make living pattern and housing cost surveys.

117439

[*Computation of Cost-of-Living Allowances for Federal Employees in Foreign Areas Could Be More Accurate*]. FPCD-82-24; B-205580. February 8, 1982. 7 pp.

Report to Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Secretary, Department of State; by Clifford I. Gould, Director, GAO Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0351).

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Central Personnel Management (805.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs; House Committee on Appropriations; Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Foreign Operations Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO completed a review of the methodology used to compute cost-of-living allowances (COLA's) for Federal personnel. **Findings/Conclusions:** Certain deficiencies in the Department of State's data collection and computation practices may result in COLA payments that are not accurate. GAO found that: (1) State did not insure that the data it collected accurately reflected the living patterns of Federal personnel; (2) living pattern data were not always used to select retail outlets where price surveys are made; (3) State did not adjust base area prices to reflect changes that occurred between foreign and base surveys; and (4) State did not weigh sale prices in its COLA computations. The COLA computation could be improved by weighting prices of items and services on

sale. COLA's are based on prices of a market basket of more than 160 goods and services in the foreign and nonforeign area compared with prices of a similar market basket area of Washington, D.C. The prices are averaged, and foreign or nonforeign average prices are divided by the base area average prices to obtain a ratio. These item price ratios are weighted by the relative importance of the expenditures they represent. Price surveys are made at least annually in COLA areas. COLA's are also revised periodically to reflect changes in currency exchange rates. Living pattern surveys are also made to identify retail outlets which the Federal personnel most frequently use and the relative importance of each source of supply. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of State should use a scientific sampling system to make living pattern surveys and direct field offices to use the results of living pattern surveys as a basis for selecting outlets for the price surveys. The Secretary of State should revise the price collection schedule to minimize the timelag between base area and cost-of-living allowance area price surveys. The Secretary of State should weight sale prices to reflect the proportion of purchases made at sale and regular prices.

117441

Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition Issues for Planning. CED-82-27. February 4, 1982. 53 pp. plus 3 appendices (8 pp.). *Staff Study* by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food (1700).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Authority: Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980. Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801). Aquaculture Act (P.L. 96-362). American Fisheries Promotion Act (P.L. 96-561).

Abstract: Public concerns about food generally focus on two immediate issues: cost and quality/safety. The food system is complex, encompassing agricultural support service industries that provide products such as energy, machinery, and chemical; the farm sector, the fishing industry; food processors such as slaughterhouses and canners; and the warehousing, distribution, and transportation systems. Previous GAO reports have addressed issues in all of these areas. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO conducted a staff study that presented: (1) the results of periodic GAO assessment of current and emerging food and agriculture concerns at the national level and (2) the issues that will guide GAO audit planning in the food, agriculture, and nutrition program areas for the near future. The study may help others to understand the critical issues facing decisionmakers in these areas. GAO found four major areas of concern: (1) the food system as a whole; (2) maintaining and increasing food productivity; (3) the Federal role in the food marketing sector; and (4) human nutrition and Federal nutritional assistance.

117449

[Comments on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 1981 Program Report and Environmental Impact Statement]. CED-82-41; B-199776. January 29, 1982. 2 pp. plus 4 enclosures (10 pp.).

Report to Norman A. Berg, Chief, Soil Conservation Service; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to PAD-80-15, March 31, 1980, Accession Number 111980.

Issue Area: Food: Exploring the Least Costly Federal Government Efforts To Alleviate the Effects of Scarce Food Input

Resources (1737); Land Use Planning and Control: Effectiveness of Programs Designed To Promote and Regulate the Development, Rehabilitation, and Conservation of Nonpublic Lands and Related Resources (2314).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region; Department of Agriculture; Soil Conservation Service.

Authority: Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-192).

Abstract: In response to the Secretary of Agriculture's request for comments, GAO reviewed the revised draft report outlining the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposed national soil and water conservation program. **Findings/Conclusions:** Although USDA has spent considerable effort in reviewing the adequacy of the nation's soil and water resources, it will not have the basis for the effective program intended by the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act until it (1) conducts a thorough assessment of soil and water resource conditions to better define the problem; (2) evaluates sufficient alternatives for conserving U.S. soil and water resources; (3) analyzes the impact of other Government programs on soil and water resources to ensure the best use of limited resources, and (4) avoids duplication of effort among Federal agencies. The proposed program could be an ineffective and costly solution, and a better analytical framework is needed to meet the requirements of the Act. GAO provided guidelines that could assist USDA in obtaining information needed to develop an effective program to improve resource conditions within limited budget resources.

117497

[U.S. Overpays for Suez Canal Transits]. ID-82-19; B-206222. February 10, 1982. 6 pp. plus 4 enclosures (4 pp.).

Report to Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary, Department of Defense; Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Secretary, Department of State; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments (0610).

Contact: International Division

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0); National Defense: Defense-Related Activities (054.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State; Department of Defense; Arab Republic of Egypt; Department of State: U.S. Embassy, Cairo, Egypt; Department of the Navy.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; House Committee on Armed Services; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Armed Services; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Abstract: Review of U.S. defense cooperation with Egypt has uncovered apparent inconsistencies in the tolls U.S. warships are being assessed by the Egyptian Government for transiting the Suez Canal. GAO initiated a review to examine these findings, to assess the magnitude of the overcharges, and to identify what steps can be taken to eliminate them. **Findings/Conclusions:** Since the U.S. Embassy in Cairo began retaining records of Canal transits in 1979, overcharges have amounted to over 18 percent of the total payments. These overcharges primarily stem from inaccurate computations by the Suez Canal Authority and the absence of any verification of bills received by the U.S. Embassy. The tolls for some classes of U.S. ships which transit the Canal have been overstated, because the ships did not have Suez Canal Special Tonnage Certificates which attest to the net weight of a ship for Canal toll purposes. Sufficient controls would reduce the unnecessary expenditure of Government funds and

ensure that, in the future, an objective standard is used to compute toll costs. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Defense should work with the Coast Guard to accelerate the preparation and dissemination of Suez Canal Special Tonnage Certificates for all classes of U.S. warships and vessels in the Military Sealift Command to introduce greater objectivity into the computation of tolls. The Secretaries of State and Defense should establish a routine verification procedure, within the office of the Defense Attache, for all bills forwarded by the Egyptian Government for Suez Canal toll collection.

117525

DOD's Beef Procurement Program Still Needs Improvement. PLRD-82-32; B-206312. February 17, 1982. 18 pp. plus 4 appendices (13 pp.).

Report to Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary, Department of Defense; by Donald J. Horan, Director, GAO Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division.

Issue Area: General Procurement: Effectiveness of Central Supply Agencies in Providing Quality Products and Services (1923), Food: Adequacy of Federal Food Quality Assurance Efforts (1721).

Contact: Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division

Budget Function: National Defense: Department of Defense - Procurement and Contracts (051.2).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of Agriculture, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Personnel Support Center.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Federal Expenditures, Research and Rules Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Armed Services: Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO conducted a review to assess the adequacy of the changes and improvements made to correct previously identified problems in Department of Defense (DOD) procedures and practices for purchasing beef. **Findings/Conclusions:** Although DOD has taken some corrective actions, further improvements are still needed. DOD changes have not resulted in increasing the number of beef suppliers in the program; rather, the number of DOD beef suppliers has decreased substantially. Among the major factors identified as problems were a lack of long term contracts, rigid and complex specification requirements, the cost of quality assurance inspections, and late payment for products delivered. Attempts to use Department of Agriculture meat graders instead of DOD in-plant inspectors are difficult because differences remain in the quality acceptance methods and practices of the two departments. These discrepancies have caused confusion among Federal inspectors and beef purveyors and have resulted in increased costs to the Government. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Defense should adopt the use of long-term contracts for the Department of Defense's troop feeding program. These contracts should be of sufficient duration and quantity to enable new suppliers to defray the startup costs involved in meeting special military requirements. In addition, the Defense Personnel Support Center should review the different forms of long-term contracts available; determine their effects on procurement, storage, and distribution; and select the most effective methods. The Secretary of Defense should establish direct lines of communication with the Department of Agriculture (USDA) on these problems and coordinate actions with USDA to correct problem areas. In addition, differences in standards between USDA and the Department of Defense should be justified, or one requirement should be agreed upon and adopted by both parties.

117550

A New Approach Is Needed for the Federal Industrial Wastewater Pretreatment Program. CED-82-37; B-198742. February 19, 1982. 15 pp. plus 1 appendix (3 pp.).

Report to Anne M. Gorsuch, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Protection From Harmful Effects of Dangerous Pesticides and Chemicals (2217).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. **Authority:** Clean Water Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to develop and implement the industrial pretreatment program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the: (1) overall scope and impact of the pretreatment program remains undefined; (2) program may result in costly, inequitable, and redundant treatment that may not address toxic pollution problems; and (3) program will be a further drain on scarce Federal, State, and local pollution control resources. GAO believes it is highly unlikely that the program can be fully implemented within the currently established timeframe. Although EPA is conducting a regulatory impact analysis of the pretreatment program, the schedule for completing the analysis and selecting an option is very ambitious. Given the many uncertainties about toxic pollution problems, GAO is concerned about the ability of EPA to resolve these issues in the relatively short time established. EPA needs to pay close attention to the problems and unresolved issues associated with the present pretreatment program. If EPA acts too quickly in selecting a pretreatment alternative, GAO believes it may commit itself to a course of action that contains many of the current program's problems and that is equally unacceptable to those involved. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency should: (1) advise Congress that the deadlines established for implementing the pretreatment program cannot be met until significant problems and issues concerning toxic pollution are resolved; and (2) provide an estimated timeframe needed to resolve these matters. The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency should include in a legislative package to Congress information on the: (1) pretreatment options considered; (2) estimated effect of the various options on the environment, water quality, and public health; (3) resources needed to implement various options; and (4) the estimated timeframe for full program implementation under the various options.

117553

[Reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission]. February 23, 1982. 7 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the Comptroller General.

Organization Concerned: Commodity Futures Trading Commission; National Futures Association.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee.

Authority: Commodity Exchange Act (Futures).

Abstract: In recent years, the commodity futures industry has experienced dramatic growth. The term "commodity" has come to

embrace a variety of financial instruments including Government securities and certificates of deposit. Substantial trading in futures contracts for these commodities has developed. An expected growth in the trading of these instruments and a continued growth in agricultural and natural resource futures will substantially increase the importance of futures in the national economy. GAO has concluded that Federal programs which protect commodity futures customers should be reauthorized. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which is responsible for these programs, has made progress in developing a regulatory framework to protect customers. Its principle programs should be retained and improved to keep rapidly expanding futures trading reasonably free from abuse. Even if the futures industry assumes an increased responsibility for regulation, the Commission will need to continue to monitor the performance of industry self-regulatory bodies. Congress should amend the Commodity Exchange Act to shift responsibility for registering futures professionals to the newly created National Futures Association with the Commission having an oversight role in this area. The Act should also be amended to allow for a flow of information on adverse market situations to the exchanges on a routine basis. The Commission's rule enforcement review program needs strengthening. The agency needs to: (1) make its criteria for contract approval more explicit and meaningful; (2) make contract approvals contingent on adequate rule enforcement; (3) assess a one-time fee to defray the appropriate costs of contract approval; (4) improve its registration program; and (5) simplify the reparations program's rules and procedures. A considerable burden can be shifted from the reparations program by removing certain limitations to increased use of arbitration. The Commission needs to improve its use of automatic data processing (ADP) to track and analyze the futures positions of large traders and identify possible situations which affect market identity. Once these improvements have been made, the Commission should use ADP in conducting market surveillance, managing the reparations program, and general operations.

117586

[Changes Are Needed in the Proposed Departmental Review and Evaluation of the Puerto Rico Block Grant]. CED-82-50; B-205691. February 24, 1982. 5 pp.
Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Alternate Mechanisms To Provide Food to Low Income Target Populations (1746); Intergovernmental Policies and Fiscal Relations: Block Grant Committee Assignments (0450).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Puerto Rico.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35; 95 Stat. 357; 95 Stat. 364). H. Rept. 97-208.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) proposed study of Puerto Rico's transition from the Food Stamp Program to the Puerto Rico Block Grant which is part of the USDA Nutritional Assistance Grant. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO believes that the limited objectives of the preliminary study plans do not fully address

the grant's primary objective to provide nutritional assistance to the needy and could therefore restrict the usefulness of the data gathered. FNS proposes to: (1) develop a case study to describe the conversion from the Food Stamp Program to the grant, and (2) estimate the impact of the grant on the participation rates, benefits, and program costs. Also, GAO believes that a complete and timely impact assessment of the new program is important to measure the grant's impact on recipient benefits and participation within Puerto Rico and to assist other States in designing and implementing a nutritional assistance program if the Food Stamp Program is turned back to the States. The second area of concern for GAO is that the methodology section of the proposed plan needs additional development. However, nothing more will be done to develop the study until Puerto Rico releases its operational plan. Some of the methodology for program assessment is independent of program specifics. For example, the preliminary study plan indicates that an abbreviated time-series design will be used to estimate cost impact. Since the time-series analysis is based upon data that are already available, the design detail could be developed to show that it will provide answers to questions of interest and concern and that the study can be operable when the new program is initiated. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture should direct the Acting Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to expand and modify the FNS preliminary evaluation plan along the lines discussed in this report to fully address the legislative objectives of the Nutritional Assistance Grant and to provide for a more comprehensive plan of data collection and analysis.

117589

[Better Ways To Provide for Use of Agricultural Information]. CED-82-46; B-206415. February 26, 1982. 7 pp.
Report to Sen. Thad Cochran, by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Best Management and Planning Tools Applicable to the Food and Agriculture System and Their Uses (1736); Program and Budget Information for Congressional Use: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (3451).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Thad Cochran.

Abstract: GAO was requested to provide information on: (1) the magnitude of data sources available in one specific agricultural subject area, water for irrigation; (2) the types and characteristics of services that provide information; (3) the types and characteristics of users having a need for information on agriculture; and (4) the ways to arrange or structure various data sources to provide users with timely access to available and useful information. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) the amount of data available on the topic, water for irrigation, is voluminous and is presented in innumerable ways by a wide array of information services; (2) users have complained that information services, which provide bibliographic data, do not respond in a timely manner and that the information they provide lacks specificity, is not in an appropriate form, or is costly; (3) different types of users have unique information needs and various levels of understanding and ability to access information; and (4) an alternative to the current approach for using the massive amount of agricultural information is an information megasystem which would involve putting existing information into one large data base. Another alternative is a user clearinghouse network which would employ a telephone communication network to provide user access to all existing information sources; it would require little user knowledge of sources or experience in accessing them. The

Department of Agriculture has a conceptual plan for such a clearinghouse network, but it is still the initial stages of development

117604

[*Opportunities for Reducing the Cost of the 1982 Agricultural and Economic Censuses*]. GGD-82-43; B-206257. February 10, 1982. Released February 26, 1982. 11 pp.

Report to Rep. Robert Garcia, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; by William J. Anderson, Director, GAO General Government Division.

Issue Area: Information Management. Effectiveness and Efficiency of Efforts To Obtain Population Data (4210).

Contact: General Government Division

Budget Function: General Government: Other General Government (806.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce; Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; Rep. Robert Garcia.

Authority: 13 U.S.C. 131. 13 U.S.C. 142. 13 U.S.C. 191

Abstract: GAO reviewed the agricultural and economic censuses, examining costs already incurred and the Bureau's estimated future costs to aid the fiscal year 1983 budget reconciliation process. In examining costs, GAO: (1) compared the 1982 censuses to previous censuses to identify changes and their expected benefits; and (2) determined the usefulness of work already performed if portions of the censuses were reduced or eliminated and the effect of the changes on estimated costs. **Findings/Conclusions:** If budget cuts arise, the Bureau of the Census is considering reducing the size and scope of the agricultural and economic censuses. For the agricultural census, the Bureau could save \$13 million by eliminating an area sample, raising the threshold for defining a farm, and eliminating the censuses of areas outside the United States. For the economic censuses, the Bureau is considering eliminating the data that are collected on a sample basis, which include data on transportation, minority-owned businesses, and major retail and central business districts. With these actions, the Bureau could save about \$6.7 million spent on the economic censuses and not affect the data gathering from establishments included in the censuses for retail and wholesale trade, selected service industries, mining and manufacturers, and construction. If the budget cuts are made within the next few months, the Bureau could save about \$19.7 million. The Bureau plans to conduct the 1982 censuses similarly to the previous censuses, except for the introduction of a changed method of data entry using computer technology. Bureau data show that, aside from increases due to inflation, there will be no additional increases in the cost of taking the 1982 censuses. The Bureau believes that the cost of the new technology, including the use of a newly acquired computer, will be offset by reduced personnel costs. Although proposed reductions would affect the completeness of the agricultural census, the specific effect on the utility of the data has not been determined.

117639

[*Protest Alleging Defective Solicitation Specifications*]. B-200127. March 2, 1982. 5 pp.

Decision re: Integrated Forest Management, Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Integrated Forest Management, Inc.; Reforestation Services, Inc.; Forest Service: Six Rivers National Forest, CA.

Authority: 42 Comp. Gen. 640. 45 Comp. Gen. 59. 55 Comp. Gen. 1362. Forest Service Manual 2150.3. B-191233 (1978). B-198725 (1981). B-200386 (1981). B-204106 (1982). B-204382 (1982)

Abstract: A firm protested the award of a contract under an invitation for bids issued by the Forest Service for aerial application of herbicides over certain forest locations. The protester contended that the solicitation was defective on several grounds, primarily that (1) the specifications for the manual alternative were unduly restrictive; (2) the solicitation violated competitive bidding principles by requesting bids on two alternatives with unequal performance requirements, and (3) the Forest Service Policy Manual required the evaluation of the two alternatives to be based upon a broad range of criteria to determine the cost effectiveness of each alternative. The Forest Service amended the solicitation to eliminate several of the provisions objected to by the protester. After bid opening, the protester still maintained that the specifications for the manual alternatives were unduly restrictive. A contract was awarded to avoid delay in performance and performance was completed. GAO held that, where the agency had a reasonable basis for the performance time requirement and the protester had not met its burden of proving that the specifications and the agency's determination of its needs were clearly unreasonable, there was no basis for a protest. Further, a solicitation which requested bids on mutually exclusive alternatives for freeing trees from surrounding vegetation did not violate the competitive bidding requirement that all bidders must bid on the same thing, because bidders bidding on one alternative were only competing with like bidders. A solicitation will not be invalidated by GAO on grounds that it failed to include evaluation criteria listed in the agency's policy manual since GAO does not consider protests concerning adherence to executive branch or departmental policies. Bias in favor of one of two methods for freeing trees from the surrounding vegetation will not be attributed to procurement officials based solely on inference or supposition. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

117652

[*The Cooperative Extension Service*]. February 17, 1982. 9 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-119, August 21, 1981, Accession Number 116172

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Cooperative Extension Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee.

Authority: Smith-Lever Act (Agricultural Extension Work).

Abstract: The Cooperative Extension Service, consisting of Federal, State, and local agricultural offices, was established primarily to provide farmers with information and to encourage them to improve their farming methods. The range of programs offered by the Extension Service and the audiences served have broadened considerably. The Extension Service's enabling legislation is general enough so that interpretations differ as to what the service should be doing and for whom. As more programs compete for resources, disagreements have arisen over what the Extension Service's mission should be. Although it is desirable that State and local program management be flexible, the Federal Extension Service should assume a more active leadership role to better satisfy Federal, State, and local needs. Improved program evaluation at all levels is needed; the major obstacle is lack of a central office responsible for clearly defining evaluation

standards. The appropriate congressional committees should examine the Service's mission, including program, clientele, funding, and organization issues. The Secretary of Agriculture should: (1) interact more with the States in the extension program development process, and (2) assume leadership, in cooperation with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, to develop and implement an accounting and evaluation system for the Cooperative Extension Service. The Department of Agriculture has agreed that clarification of the Extension Service's mission would be beneficial.

117664

States' Compliance Lacking in Meeting Safe Drinking Water Regulations. CED-82-43; B-206389. March 3, 1982. 18 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.).

Report to Anne M. Gorsuch, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to Testimony, June 15, 1983, Accession Number 121653

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Environmental Protection Regulatory Strategies (2208).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Authority: Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.).

Abstract: The National Interim Primary Drinking Water Regulations established drinking water quality standards and water testing requirements to ensure the quality of drinking water provided by the Nation's public water systems. However, compliance with these regulations by the Nation's public water systems seems minimal at best. GAO reviewed the Safe Drinking Water Program to determine how effectively the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and primary States, those granted authority by the EPA Administrator to operate the program, have implemented the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) many small community public water system supplies are not meeting the drinking water quality standards and are not being tested as required by Federal regulations; and (2) as defined in the Act, the effectiveness of the public notification process in informing drinking water users of violations is questionable. GAO believes that a combination of factors including the lack of full-time and properly trained operators, water system operator apathy, failure of States to perform water sampling activities, and insufficient State resources are the primary factors causing the water quality standards problems. GAO also found that the enforcement actions in the three EPA regional offices and the seven States included in its review to bring water systems into compliance ranged from none to minimal, followed no particular pattern, and were not as timely as they should have been. EPA has recently initiated several measures to deal with the mounting noncompliance problem, and GAO believes that the current action is a step in the right direction. If properly carried forward, this effort should result in actions designed to improve the water quality program. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator, EPA, should direct the Office of Drinking Water to develop and implement specific guidelines that the States can use when developing the enforcement strategy section of their State plans. The guidelines should include a model for ranking water systems for enforcement action, including, as a minimum, such factors as: (1) the type of

violation, exceeding water quality standard or the failure to test, (2) the degree of violation, the extent to which the drinking water quality standard is exceeded or the number of months the water supplier failed to test, and (3) the size of population affected by the violation. The guidelines should also identify the various types of enforcement actions available. Finally, the guidelines should clearly define the terms "serious violators" and "less serious violators." The guidelines will help States to more effectively use their limited resources and provide for consistent application of enforcement actions.

117665

[Computation of Cost-of-Living Allowances for Uniformed Personnel Could Be More Accurate]. FPCD-82-8; B-205580 February 25, 1982. 13 pp.

Report to Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary, Department of Defense; by Clifford I. Gould, Director, GAO Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation: Military Compensation (0325).

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Division

Budget Function: General Government: Central Personnel Management (805.0); National Defense: Military Pay (051.3).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Armed Services: Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Armed Services: Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the methodology used to compute cost-of-living allowances (COLA's) for federal personnel because there were concerns about its appropriateness. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the Department of Defense (DOD) uses an out-dated spendable income table on which to base COLA payments and adjustments for environmental factors resulting in undercompensation for some uniformed personnel and overcompensation for others. DOD, the Department of State, and the Office of Personnel Management administer COLA programs for uniformed and federal civilian employees in foreign and nonforeign areas, respectively. COLA's computed by these agencies are based on prices of a market basket of goods and services in the foreign or nonforeign area compared with prices of a similar market basket in the base area. The administering agencies divide the foreign or nonforeign average prices by the base area average prices to obtain a ratio. These item ratios are weighted by the relative importance of the expenditures they represent. Correcting several deficiencies in data collection and processing would insure that the COLA's more accurately reflect differences in prices. Data received from the field were inconsistently edited and incorrectly adjusted for timelags between base area and COLA area price surveys. DOD COLA's would be improved if sale prices were weighted to reflect the proportion of purchases made at sale and regular prices. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Defense should use procedures which insure consistent use of price data in the cost-of-living allowance computations. The Secretary of Defense should use weighted sale prices to reflect the proportion of purchases made at sale and regular prices. The Secretary of Defense should discontinue the practice of adjusting cost-of-living allowances in Alaska to reimburse uniformed personnel for special environmental factors. If a transfer allowance is considered necessary, DOD should propose legislation for such an allowance. The Secretary of Defense should use a scientific sampling system to make living pattern surveys and direct field offices to use the results of living pattern surveys as a basis for selecting outlets for the price surveys. The Secretary of Defense should revise the price collection

schedule to minimize the timelag between base area and cost-of-living allowance area price surveys. The Secretary of Defense should adopt a spendable income table based on the most recent consumer expenditure survey

117710

[Reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission], March 2, 1982. 7 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.).

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Research and General Legislation Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Commodity Futures Trading Commission; National Futures Association.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Research and General Legislation Subcommittee.

Authority: Commodity Exchange Act (Futures).

Abstract: In recent years, the commodity futures industry has experienced dramatic growth. The term "commodity" has come to embrace a variety of financial instruments including Government securities and certificates of deposit. Substantial trading in futures contracts for these commodities has developed. An expected growth in the trading of these instruments and a continued growth in agricultural and natural resource futures will substantially increase the importance of futures in the national economy. GAO has concluded that Federal programs which protect commodity futures customers should be reauthorized. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which is responsible for these programs, has made progress in developing a regulatory framework to protect customers. Its principle programs should be retained and improved to keep rapidly expanding futures trading reasonably free from abuse. Even if the futures industry assumes an increased responsibility for regulation, the Commission will need to continue to monitor the performance of industry self-regulatory bodies. Congress should amend the Commodity Exchange Act to give the Commission an oversight role in this area. The Act should also be amended to allow for a flow of information on adverse market situations to the exchanges on a routine basis. The Commission's rule enforcement review program needs strengthening. The agency needs to: (1) make its criteria for contract approval more explicit and meaningful; (2) make contract approvals contingent on adequate rule enforcement; (3) assess a one-time fee to defray the appropriate costs of contract approval; (4) improve its registration program; (5) simplify the reparations program's rules and procedures. A considerable burden can be shifted from the reparations program by removing certain limitations to increased use of arbitration. The Commission needs to improve its use of automatic data processing (ADP) in tracking and analyzing the futures positions of large traders and to identify possible situations which affect market integrity. Once these improvements have been made, the Commission should use ADP in conducting market surveillance, managing the reparations program, and general operations.

117724

Food Stamp Workfare: Cost Benefit Results Not Conclusive; Administrative Problems Continue. CED-82-44; B-206381. February 19, 1982. 5 pp. plus 3 appendices (25 pp.).

Report to Rep. Paul Findley; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: How Can the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program Be Improved (1722); Income Security and Social Services: Disincentives for Self Sufficiency (1321).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604 0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Labor, Ketrion, Inc.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Paul Findley.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P. L. 97-98).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the continuing operations and evaluation of the Food Stamp Workfare Demonstration Project which was designed to test the feasibility of food stamp recipients working in return for their benefits. GAO wanted to find out if participating jurisdictions had developed enough workfare jobs to enable them to assign all eligible individuals to work and whether workfare officials were experiencing any difficulties, such as transportation problems, in getting participants to work at the job sites. In addition, GAO tried to identify any other emerging problems or program improvements as well as efforts to evaluate the demonstration through a contract with a consulting firm. The Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 authorized the implementation of workfare as a permanent feature of the Food Stamp Program and eliminated several of the exemptions for participation, eliminated the mandatory job-search period, and strengthened the penalty for not fulfilling workfare obligations. **Findings/Conclusions:** The GAO review showed numerous opportunities to enhance efficiency and workfare program benefits. GAO cannot be certain how many jurisdictions will establish workfare programs solely for food stamp recipients. However, problems which GAO identified can serve as a caution to Agriculture and workfare project officials to avoid certain pitfalls in designing workfare programs. The GAO study confirmed that expanded workfare eligibility criteria, shorter job-search periods, stronger penalties for noncompliance, and better local administration would increase participation in the food stamp workfare program and provide additional program benefits. Improved administration would result in more able-bodied persons working and would reduce program costs by denying some benefits to those who do not complete workfare job obligations. However, delays in interviewing and assigning eligible participants to workfare jobs, coupled with slowness in penalizing individuals for not completing workfare obligations, continued to result in a loss of benefits during the extended demonstration period. Many clients were interviewed twice. GAO found that it was possible to have a local employment service office assume certain workfare functions, including the required interview for most new benefit recipients. Enough jobs have been developed for workfare participants at the sites which GAO visited, but startup problems such as language and transportation difficulties prevented some job assignments.

117733

The Kansas City Regional Office: At the Crossroads of Our Nation. 1982. 9 pp.

by Marge Ellis, GAO Field Operations Division: Regional Office (Kansas City).

In *The GAO Review*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, Winter 1982, pp. 13-21.

Contact: Field Operations Division: Regional Office (Kansas City).

Abstract: As part of a series of articles on GAO regional operations, activities at the GAO Kansas City Regional Office were reviewed. The Kansas City Regional Office conducts its work in areas which primarily include: agriculture; communications; logistics management, procurement, and readiness; personnel management; tax administration; and energy.

117844

[*Legality of Migrant Legal Action Program Activities*]. B-205906 March 10, 1982 2 pp
Letter to Allison T. French, Director of Labor Relations, Florida Farm Bureau Federation; by Robert H. Hunter, Assistant General Counsel, GAO Office of the General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Florida Farm Bureau Federation; Legal Services Corp.; Migrant Legal Action Program.

Authority: Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Act, 1981. Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act of 1963 (7 U.S.C. 2041 et seq.) Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.) 60 Comp. Gen. 423 B-202787 (1981) 42 U.S.C. 2996c(a)(3) 42 U.S.C. 2996f(a)(5) 42 U.S.C. 2996f(b)(7)

Abstract: GAO received a complaint that a legal services corporation grantee was holding conferences across the Nation with representatives of church, labor, community, and minority organizations for the purpose of network and coalition building in possible violation of Federal law. It was alleged that the grantee offered to pay the travel expenses of those needing assistance, and the complainant reported that the conference discussions and training emphasized methods of developing a broad understanding and support of farmworker issues and the effect that the termination of the Legal Services Program would have on the farmworker coalition. The complainant believed that such activities violated statutory provisions prohibiting the use of Federal funds for grass roots lobbying campaigns and for the organization of associations and federations. Upon a review of the material supplied, GAO found no evidence that conference representatives urged members of the public to communicate with Members of Congress regarding their support or defeat of legislation pending before that body. The evidence presented indicated that the program was not formally organizing an entity, but was merely establishing a communications network between existing organizations, and these activities are authorized under applicable legislation. GAO also found that a portion of each conference was, in fact, devoted to providing legitimate legal service activities. Therefore, GAO was unable to conclude that any Federal law had been violated.

117849

[*Estimate of the Panama Canal Commission's Annual Revenues, 1983*]. ID-82-26; B-204078. March 19, 1982 4 pp. plus 1 enclosure (3 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting: Operations, Financial Position, and Changes in Financial Position (2802); International Affairs: Effectiveness of the U.S. Government in Carrying Out Implementation of the Panama Canal Treaty (0617).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Panama Canal Commission.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Panama Canal Act of 1979 (22 U.S.C. 3601).

Abstract: The Panama Canal Act requires the Comptroller General to certify the estimate of the Panama Canal Commission's annual revenues to be deposited in the Panama Canal Commission Fund. This report responds to this requirement for fiscal year 1983 estimated revenues and deposits. **Findings/Conclusions:** The Act provides no criteria for GAO to use in certifying the estimated revenues; therefore, GAO followed a previously used procedure to test Commission estimates and forecasts. Tolls charged to vessels which transit the Canal generate the majority

of the Commission's projected revenues. Non-toll revenues are expected to be generated by providing supporting services, such as navigation, sales of water and power, and rents on employee housing. The methods of estimating toll and non-toll revenues differ and were treated differently in the review. GAO found that comparison with previous years' estimates indicated that the Commission has been successful in estimating its revenues. GAO concluded that the Commission's fiscal year 1983 estimate of revenues and deposits appears reasonable.

117871

[*Expedited Service in the Food Stamp Program*]. CED-82-59; B-206711. March 15, 1982 Released March 23, 1982 13 pp.

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO was asked to examine the use of expedited service in the Food Stamp Program, including: (1) the extent to which expedited service is used; (2) the extent of the service's susceptibility to abuse; (3) the impact that the service has on administrative case workloads; and (4) suggestions for improving or eliminating the service. **Findings/Conclusions:** The expedited service provision requires processing of new food stamp applications and the issuing of benefits in 3 working days. In general, households considered destitute or with no monthly income are eligible for expedited services. The verification of household circumstances, except for identity or residency, may be postponed. The number of households applying for food stamps under expedited service varied greatly. The error rate for expedited cases generally was lower than the rate for food stamp cases overall; however, because of the limited number of expedited cases in the review and the impact of incomplete case reviews, the error rate data may not be accurate. The higher error rate for the overall caseload may be explained partly by the fact that some kinds of errors are unlikely in the expedited caseload. For example, agency errors account for about one-third of the dollars issued erroneously in regular cases, but are rare in expedited cases. Further, although some expedited service cases contained overissuance errors, they had no impact on case error rates. Another factor was that not all quality control cases selected for review were actually reviewed. State officials said that the handling of expedited cases disrupted the daily food stamp work schedule, and officials in States with computer mail issuance reported similar problems. Officials in some of the States visited favored changes to the expedited procedures, such as longer application periods and a liquid resource test, but had mixed feelings about a gross income for clients.

117890

[*Use of Appropriated Funds for Ethnic Foods*]. B-199387. March 23, 1982. 3 pp.

Decision re: Department of the Army; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of the Army: Oakland Army Base, CA.

Authority: 60 Comp. Gen. 303. 57 Comp. Gen. 806. 47 Comp. Gen. 657. 58 Comp. Gen. 202.

Abstract: A decision was requested as to whether the Army may expend appropriated funds for preparing and serving ethnic dishes at an annual heritage festival. Payment for the festival's entertainment expenses, but not for food and utensils, was authorized. A Deputy Comptroller of the Army argued that appropriated funds should be used to pay for food samples and utensils for serving because: (1) providing personnel with samples of cuisine of different cultures and ethnic groups should be considered a legitimate part of the base's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program; and (2) the food samples served an educational function and were not intended as meals or refreshments. GAO held that, where food is served as part of a formal ethnic awareness program intended to increase employee awareness of and appreciation for a cultural heritage, samples may be an authorized part of the agency's EEO program. Portion size and other circumstances showed that serving the food samples was aimed at promoting EEO objectives and that the food was not meant to be a meal or snack. Accordingly, GAO did not object to the use of appropriated funds for food and cutlery.

117916

Information on Corps of Engineers Deauthorization Program for Water Projects. CED-82-55; B-206437. March 23, 1982. 12 pp. plus 1 appendix (14 pp.).

Report to Rep. James H. Weaver; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Benefit-Cost Analyses Consideration of Beneficial and Adverse Effects of Water Resources Projects (2554).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Department of Defense; Department of the Interior; Department of the Army.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. John F. Seiberling; Rep. Buddy Roemer; Rep. Ronald E. Paul; Rep. Barney Frank; Rep. Floyd Fithian; Rep. Robert W. Edgar; Rep. Berkley W. Bedell; Rep. James H. Weaver.*

Authority: Water Resources Development Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-251). P.L. 97-128. Engineering Reg. 1105-2-82. 95 Stat. 681.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Army Corps of Engineers deauthorization program for water projects as prescribed in the Water Resources and Development Act of 1974. In its report, GAO explained the Corps' implementation of the deauthorization program, outlined its results and costs, and provided Corps comments on the advantages, disadvantages, and possible changes to the program. **Findings/Conclusions:** In 1974, legislation was enacted to provide a means for removing water resources projects from the list of authorized but unconstructed projects. Projects may be recommended for deauthorization if they have been authorized for at least 8 years but have received no appropriations for the last 8 years. Before recommending projects for deauthorization, the Chief of Engineers is required to: (1) obtain views from interested Federal agencies and the Governors of affected States, and (2) notify Members of Congress in whose State or district a project is located. Regulations state that deauthorization reviews should be conducted to the extent necessary to determine whether a project should continue to be authorized. In the past 7 years, 877 projects were identified as eligible for possible deauthorization. Congress reviewed 503 projects, deauthorized 453 projects, and continued 50 projects through resolutions. The Corps has received about \$1.8 million in appropriations to

conduct deauthorization reviews. The largest appropriation was in 1975, and the amounts have declined in subsequent fiscal years. Corps officials interviewed stated that the program has been useful in deauthorizing unneeded or unjustified projects and commented on several possible changes to the process including: (1) adding a sunset provision to automatically deauthorize a project not funded in a specific number of years, (2) recommending projects for deauthorization when they become eligible without any deauthorization review, and (3) submitting deauthorization recommendations periodically rather than annually.

117942

Corps of Engineers Should Reevaluate the Elk Creek Project's Benefits and Costs. CED-82-53; B-206437. March 15, 1982. 40 pp. **Report to Rep. James H. Weaver;** by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to Testimony, April 6, 1982, Accession Number 117992.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Benefit-Cost Analyses Consideration of Beneficial and Adverse Effects of Water Resources Projects (2554)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Department of the Army; Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations; Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; Rep. John F. Seiberling; Rep. Buddy Roemer; Rep. Ronald E. Paul; Rep. Barney Frank; Rep. Floyd J. Fithian; Rep. Robert W. Edgar; Rep. Berkley W. Bedell; Rep. James H. Weaver.*

Authority: Area Redevelopment Act (P.L. 87-27). Clean Water Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-217). Flood Control Act (33 U.S.C. 701a). Flood Control Act of 1962 (P.L. 87-874). Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234). Water Resources Development Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-251). Water Supply Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-500). 18 C.F.R. 704.39. S. Doc. No. 97 (87th Cong.). National Wildlife Federation v. Gorsuch, Civ. Act. No. 79-0915 (D.D.C. 1982). 43 U.S.C. 390.

Abstract: GAO was requested to review the Army Corps of Engineers' benefit-cost analysis of the Elk Creek Project under construction in Jackson, Oregon. The review focused on the latest benefit-cost analysis which was prepared in 1981 for the fiscal year (FY) 1982 budget. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO questioned the 76 percent of the \$5,457,000 in annual benefits estimated by the Corps in 1981 for the FY 1982 budget. Specifically, GAO questioned whether the: (1) flood control benefits developed in 1974 reflect a subsequent lower potential population and property value growth rate and more stringent flood plain zoning laws passed by local governments in the Elk Creek flood plain area; (2) Corps included water supply benefits without assessing the future water needs predicted by the Rogue River Basin communities; (3) Corps developed recreation benefits in 1973 and 1974 on the basis of now outdated recreation use patterns; (4) Corps based irrigation benefit estimates on an irrigation plan discarded in 1975 by another Federal agency because it was no longer economically feasible; and (5) Corps computed area development benefits for the county in which the project is to be constructed and a neighboring county. GAO is not questioning the fish and wildlife benefits other than those related to irrigation. However, some agencies have expressed concern about the possible adverse effects of the project on water quality and the fishery in the Rogue River. GAO found that project costs are understated by \$65,000 annually because, contrary to applicable benefit-cost

procedures, costs associated with interest on construction expenditures and the acquisition of project lands and timber were not updated. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Secretary of the Army should require the Chief, Corps of Engineers, to reexamine the economic feasibility of the Elk Creek Project and to resolve the questions on project benefits and costs.

117945

[*General Accounting Office Reviews of the Food Stamp Program*]. March 29, 1982. 9 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Abstract: Quality control data for the 6 months ended March 1981 showed that 10.6 percent of food stamp program benefits were overissuances and 2.6 percent were underissuances. The majority of the overissuances and underissuances of food stamps stemmed from errors in determining correct income, assets, and household size. In most cases, the underlying cause was incorrect data provided by clients or their failure to provide information. The failure of food stamp offices to obtain sufficient documentation and to make proper use of client-reported data or other available information also contributed to program losses. Regulations now permit States to request more documentation from clients and to perform more verification on household size, liquid resources, shelter costs, utility expenses, and dependent care. The verification process would be more efficient if more extensive use was made of existing quality control data to identify households with greater probability of having errors in their cases. Each State with an error rate of 5 percent or more must have a department-approved plan to reduce errors. Greater use of automated data processing could eliminate errors, facilitate verification, and save time. Making States financially liable for program errors would provide a major incentive for better program administration. If such a proposal is adopted, States must be allowed access to data needed to verify applicants' reported income and assets. The proposal to consolidate administrative funding for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, and Food Stamp Programs would provide opportunities for savings. Treating persons residing together as a single household for food stamp purposes would greatly simplify the process. Congress might consider creating a standard deduction for shelter costs rather than taking into account many varying household circumstances. Only a small amount of overissuances have been collected. Congress has given the States authority to pursue collection of overissued benefits through an offset provision. These provisions will be implemented in May 1982. The Department of Agriculture needs to correct weaknesses in its Authorization-To-Participate System by requiring the use of identification cards in all locations experiencing significant numbers of duplicate transactions.

117991

[*General Accounting Office Reviews of Department of Agriculture Activities*]. April 1, 1982. 8 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Commodity Futures Trading Commission; Department of Agriculture: Feder-

al Crop Insurance Corp.; Farmers Home Administration; Cooperative Extension Service

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Authority: Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980; Agriculture and Food Act of 1981; Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981

Abstract: GAO discussed the results of its past year's major reviews which concerned Department of Agriculture (USDA) activities and related presidential budget proposals for fiscal year 1983. Duplicate issuances of food stamp participation authorization and other program losses amount to about \$12 million annually. USDA needs to increase its efforts to upgrade the fiscal integrity of issuance procedures and to hold States liable for food stamp benefit losses. GAO found workfare to be a reasonable concept; however, it recommended changes to increase participation, shorten job-search periods, and increase penalties for non-compliance. The President's budget proposal to phase in full State responsibility for erroneous payments for food stamps and other entitlement programs would increase the State's financial liability, would provide a major incentive for better administration, and could result in savings. GAO found that all types of school lunches fell short in providing recommended levels of basic nutrients, and schools often received the wrong quantities and kinds of food as well as untimely food deliveries. Financial resources for nutrition education in schools need to be used more effectively. Other food programs which might be merged into a grant to the States or made into a block grant have had recurring problems and need improved program management. The farmer-owned grain reserve program has only partially met its objectives, and GAO has proposed adjustments for the program. Federal regulatory programs which protect futures markets and market participants should be reauthorized and improved to protect the rapidly expanding futures trading market. GAO is examining the actuarial soundness of Federal Crop Insurance premiums, the program's rates and services, and whether the program should become independent. GAO reviewed the major USDA soil conservation programs and agrees with presidential proposals that conservation assistance should be focused on high priority problems and technical assistance. GAO also reviewed agricultural credit programs and the effectiveness of the Russian grain embargo. GAO reported on a number of serious problems which exist in the maintenance of a base stock of genetic material for domestic and world food plants. GAO is also reviewing the underuse of agricultural research facilities and has recommended an examination of the Cooperative Extension Service's mission.

117992

[*Corps of Engineers Benefit-Cost Analysis for the Elk Creek Project*]. April 6, 1982. 8 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-82-53, March 15, 1982, Accession Number 117942.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Department of Defense; Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; *Rep.* John F. Seiberling; *Rep.* Buddy Roemer; *Rep.* Ronald E. Paul; *Rep.* Barney Frank; *Rep.* Floyd J. Fithian; *Rep.* Robert W. Edgar; *Rep.* Berkley W. Bedell; *Rep.* James H. Weaver.

Abstract: GAO discussed the results of its review of the Army Corps of Engineers' benefit-cost analysis for a project in Elk

Creek, Oregon, designed to provide flood control, water supply, recreation, irrigation, area redevelopment, fish and wildlife enhancement, and water quality control benefits. Although the Corps estimated that the project would produce an excess of benefits over costs, questions were raised during the review relating primarily to the changing conditions of the area since the Corps' computation of the benefits. GAO found that, since the Corps does not reevaluate project benefits and costs each year to reflect changing conditions, in many cases the benefits do not reflect the current conditions of the area and the effect those conditions will have on the project. GAO recommended that the Corps resolve this matter and recalculate project benefits and costs so that, when further funding is being considered, Congress will have current information on the economic feasibility of the Elk Creek Project.

118121

[Identifying Computer Data Bases To Aid Congressional Oversight on the Needs of Older Americans]. IPE-82-6; B-206178. April 19, 1982. 3 pp. plus 1 enclosure (7 pp.)

Report to Sen. John Heinz, Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging, by Eleanor Chelmsky, Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Methods To Improve the Conduct of Federal Evaluation Studies (2603).

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Budget Function: Automatic Data Processing (990.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Special Committee on Aging; Sen. John Heinz.

Abstract: A congressional request was made for assistance to develop a national data base to aid oversight on the names of older Americans. GAO was designated to provide technical assistance for two design tasks which would: (1) identify data archives and repositories in the United States that emphasize data on aging; and (2) select the data files that contain information on aging. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO applied two major criteria for screening data archives and repositories: (1) the data had to have the potential for providing information on the four policy areas of interest to Congress, and (2) the archive or repository had to be established and currently accessible. To identify national data files of interest, GAO focused on geographically based files and found that the county was the most suitable geographic level because of its compatibility with the existing review system. GAO compiled a list of 13 technical issues on aging as being important for consideration, and it included a suggestion which provided an alternative approach to identifying data files based on the individual.

118122

[Information on Federal Funding of Portions of the San Luis Unit of the California Central Valley Project]. CED-82-64; B-198221. April 13, 1982. 6 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Report to Rep. George Miller; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Financing, Cost Sharing, and Repayment Policies for Water Resources Projects and Programs (2508).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Reclamation; California.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. George Miller.

Authority: San Luis Act (P.L. 86-488). P.L. 84-130. P.L. 95-46.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the funding, obligations, and expenditures for

constructing the distribution systems and drains component of the San Luis Unit of the California Central Valley Project. **Findings/Conclusions:** The proposed system will be the largest system ever built by the Bureau of Reclamation and will irrigate more than one-half million acres. Although construction of the entire unit has not been completed, irrigation water has been delivered since 1967. Construction has been completed on most of the major project features component, and the Bureau considers the authorized funding for this aspect to be adequate to complete construction of the facilities. Since 1975, the Bureau has considered the authorization ceiling for the distribution systems and drains to be inadequate because the authorization was not allowed to increase based on engineering indexes. In 1977, legislation was passed which provided some increase in the original authorization ceiling and which created a taskforce to review the management, organization, and operations of the unit. Until 1979, the distribution systems and drain component has received the maximum authorized funding. However, some of this funding was shifted in 1979 to the separate major projects features component and to other construction projects based on their higher priority needs. At the end of fiscal year 1981, expenditures and unliquidated obligations for the distribution systems and drains totaled less than the authorized ceiling. Today, insufficient funding authority remains to begin major additional work. Therefore, the program is essentially on hold until a new funding ceiling is authorized by Congress.

118136

[EPA's Progress in Implementing the Superfund Program]. April 20, 1982. 9 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-21, November 19, 1980, Accession Number 113806.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee

Authority: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976.

Abstract: Comments were presented on the results of a prior review of the Superfund Program which is designed to finance and clean up uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. The fund is to be used by the Federal Government, primarily by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), or a State Government to clean up spilled toxic wastes and hazardous waste sites where the responsible party does not take appropriate action. Implementation by EPA of the program has been hampered by a lack of final policies and guidance. Although the Superfund legislation required a national priority list of at least 400 sites by June 1981, EPA was only able to provide an interim list of 115 sites. EPA decided to develop the interim priority list because it realized that the legislatively mandated deadline would not be met. In the view of EPA, the interim list was beneficial in that it started the Superfund Program moving and provided valuable experience in implementing a site prioritization system. To determine which sites would make the interim list, EPA developed a hazard ranking system. Although EPA has two primary data bases on uncontrolled, abandoned, or inactive hazardous waste sites, it lacks a national inventory of the total number of such sites existing. Nearly 16 months after Superfund was enacted, there have been few Superfund financed remedial action accomplishments. Lack of available funding for Superfund activities is not a cause for limited program accomplishments. In fact, Superfund obligations lag far behind the spending levels appropriated by Congress.

118145

[*OCS Leasing Program*]. April 22, 1982. 9 pp
Testimony before the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; Panama Canal and Outer Continental Shelf Subcommittee; by Douglas L. McCullough, Deputy Director, GAO Energy and Minerals Division
Refer to EMD-82-26, December 18, 1981, Accession Number 117131

Contact: Energy and Minerals Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Panama Canal and Outer Continental Shelf Subcommittee; *Rep.* A. Toby Moffett, *Rep.* John D. Dingell, *Rep.* Walter B. Jones.

Authority: Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978.

Abstract: Proposed changes to the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore leasing program, which were designed to accelerate the leasing and development of offshore lands, focused on: (1) revising the existing 5-year leasing schedule to increase sales, and (2) streamlining the administrative procedures and processes for planning lease sales and conducting post-sale activities. Previous studies done by GAO showed that, overall, GAO favored the proposed program. However, problems in implementing the program included the: (1) practical details of implementing the streamlining process; (2) potential impact of the program; and (3) capability of the Department of the Interior to implement the program. Recently, Interior submitted a tentative proposed final leasing proposal to Congress. It appeared that Interior had done a more thorough job of documenting its analyses and planning its support of this proposal and that it was responsive to GAO concerns and recommendations. Program funding and staffing estimates for 1982 showed an increase over the estimates for 1981. The anticipated funding for the 1982 program was less than that for the 1980 leasing schedule, but staffing estimates were greater for 1982. The proposal appears to be a comprehensive analysis of developmental, environmental, and economic impacts and trade-offs of the leasing program. Of concern to GAO is the post-sale bid evaluation and acceptance process, the major question being how many land tracts will require evaluation. Interior needs to continue close surveillance in this area, since the ability to evaluate and award tracts which received few bids in a timely manner is crucial to the success of the accelerated program.

118159

[*Protest Against VA Contract Award*]. B-204991. April 20, 1982. 3 pp.

Decision re: Transcon Associates Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Veterans Administration; Transcon Associates Inc.; Wright and Kremers, Inc.

Authority: 52 Comp. Gen. 604. F.P.R. 1-2.406 B-205038.2 (1981). B-204450 (1982). 15 U.S.C. 637(b)(6).

Abstract: A firm protested the award of a contract under an invitation for bids (IFB) issued as a small business set-aside by the Veterans Administration (VA) for alterations to the food service facilities at a VA medical center. The protester contended that the awardee's bid should have been rejected as nonresponsive because of the firm's bidding approach and that the awardee was not a small business and therefore should have been found ineligible for the award. The protester bid a separate price for each of the three items. The awardee quoted the full price for the base bid but, for the deductive bid items, it quoted the cost of the work deleted. In the view of VA, bidders had to bid full prices

for each item and, on that basis, the agency considered that the awardee's intended bids were evident on the face of the form and that the bids therefore could be corrected to reflect them. The protester claimed that the awardee's bid should have been rejected because the firm did not indicate the total price of the deductive bid items and therefore violated the IFB instructions. GAO held that (1) failure to precisely follow the IFB instructions with respect to how to enter a bid price for a deductive bid item does not render the bid unacceptable where the intended bid price is obvious from the bid; and (2) the protest that the awardee, under a small business set-aside, should not have been considered a small business firm because it is controlled by a large business is dismissed since the Small Business Administration is empowered to make conclusive determinations on matters of small business size status. Accordingly, the protest was denied in part and dismissed in part.

118196

FDA's Approach to Reviewing Over-the-Counter Drugs Is Reasonable, but Progress Is Slow. HRD-82-41, B-206976 April 26, 1982. 30 pp. plus 2 appendices (13 pp.)

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection; Prompt Removal of Unsafe or Ineffective Drugs From the Market (0922); Health Programs; Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1251).

Contact: Human Resources Division

Budget Function: Health Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Food and Drug Administration

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations; Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; Health and the Environment Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations; Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee, *Senate* Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Congress

Authority: Drug Listing Act of 1972 (21 U.S.C. 360). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301).

Abstract: GAO reported on the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) evaluation of the safety and effectiveness of over-the-counter drugs, a review which began in 1972 and which is not expected to be completed until 1990. **Findings/Conclusions:** The FDA strategy for reviewing over-the-counter drugs involves making a scientific analysis of available data and setting standards of safety and effectiveness for each ingredient used in classes of drugs, instead of reviewing each drug product separately. The review process consists of the review of the scientific data by expert advisory panels, FDA review of the panel findings, drafting and publishing of monographs, and the enforcement of the monographs. In 10 years, FDA has completed only 4 of 64 planned final regulations. Average processing time has risen despite a greatly increased staff. The review has resulted in unsafe or ineffective products being removed from the market. Also, products have been voluntarily reformulated and relabeled, and some drugs that previously were available only by prescription are now sold over the counter. However, most of the review's expected benefits have not been realized. The review turned out to be a much larger task than anticipated. Additional factors which contributed to delays included: poor prioritizing, failure to use status reports to track progress in the completion of monographs, delayed policy decisions, and the ineffective use of staff in branch offices. A GAO review of two pilot compliance programs indicated potential problems for future compliance efforts. These problems were caused by the lack of an accurate

listing of over-the-counter drugs and the FDA failure to adequately monitor or evaluate enforcement efforts. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to establish priorities for completing individual monographs based on objective criteria, such as consumer sales or market impact, and establish detailed milestones for completing the development of monographs and the publication of final regulations based on actual experience, staff skills and experience, the work required, and the priority of the monographed document. The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to develop a mechanism for high-level agency officials to promptly identify and resolve policy issues. The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to review, and revise where appropriate, procedures for reviewing draft monograph documents to ensure that branch personnel are given the necessary supervision and authority to develop the products for which they are responsible. The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to determine, based on the anticipated cost and timeliness of possible alternative approaches, whether the over-the-counter drug listing files are needed. If the listing is not needed, FDA should propose legislation to amend the Drug Listing Act to eliminate the reporting requirement. If it is needed, FDA should assess the relative efficiency of updating the entire system in the next few years or updating the system by drug category as monographs are published. The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to establish measurable objectives for the over-the-counter drug enforcement effort and the expected timetables for performing the work. The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to maintain for each category of drug product a complete master list of firms manufacturing the drug and a list of products as they are identified for each monograph. The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to track the progress made in reviewing and following up on products subject to the monographs and highlight, through written reports or regular meetings with district representatives, problems encountered in enforcing monographs. The Secretary of HHS should direct the Commissioner of FDA to establish goals for expediting the over-the-counter drug review and develop a system for measuring progress in completing all monograph documents which measures progress against projected milestones and provides feedback to HHS and FDA.

118258

[Home Help Services: Older People's Need For and Cost of Home Services]. April 24, 1982. 11 pp.

Speech before the Ohio Academy of Science; by William F. Laurie, GAO Field Operations Division: Regional Suboffice (Cleveland).

Contact: Field Operations Division: Regional Suboffice (Cleveland).

Organization Concerned: Ohio Academy of Science.

Authority: Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3045)

Abstract: GAO conducted a regional study of over 80,000 persons who were 65 years old or older and not residing in institutions to identify factors that could affect the well-being of older people. The analysis was designed to determine: (1) how many older people had a need for home help; (2) what specific portion of the need for home help is being met, and by whom; (3) the cost of existing home help, and who is bearing the cost; (4) what it would cost to expand home help to all older people who need it; and (5) how many older people would have all of their needs met by expanding different kinds of home help. GAO estimated that more than a third of all relief provided to the elderly was in the form of assistance in performing activities of daily living, such as meal preparation or housework. The average cost of this kind of aid for each older person in the sample population was \$2,400 in

1975. Approximately 40 percent of the sample could not do one or more of 13 daily tasks. Of that 40 percent, more than half were receiving assistance, mostly from families and friends. The remaining people needed more compensatory help to do daily tasks. More people needed assistance with housework than any other daily task and assistance with shopping and traveling to places out of walking distance followed in importance. Many people had a need for multiple kinds of relief. Public agencies were playing an important but smaller role than family and friends in providing home help to older people. Only 22 percent of the sample were receiving all of the aid that they needed. Each older person in the study received an average of \$429 worth of home help in 1976. Families and friends were providing an average of \$349 worth of home help and agencies were providing the equivalent of another \$80 per person. Expanding home help to all older people would nearly double the cost of existing home help. If assistance with housework were expanded to all the older people in the GAO study region who needed but were not getting such relief, an additional 4,300 older people would be receiving aid. If assistance with shopping were expanded, another 1,600 older people would have their needs met.

118273

[Protest Alleging Restrictive Specifications]. B-205610. May 4, 1982. 3 pp

Decision re: London Fog Co.; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: London Fog Co.; Defense Logistics Agency; Defense Construction Supply Center.

Authority: B-192361 (1981). B-199690.2 (1981)

Abstract: A firm protested that an invitation for bids (IFB) issued by the Defense Construction Supply Center for the procurement of insecticidal fog generators was unduly restrictive of competition because the specifications overstated the agency's minimum needs. The protester contended that there was no valid reason for the low maximum blower pressure specified in the IFB and that the requirement effectively precluded the use of its equipment. The agency indicated that the low pressure was essential to lessen the risks to personnel who would be using the equipment. In addition, the agency stated that this method disperses insecticide over a greater distance than the method proposed by the protester and results in better penetration of the foliage. The protester submitted letters from experts to show that the agency's conclusion was wrong and argued that a testing requirement was unreasonable. The determination of an agency's minimum needs and how best to meet them, consistent with the requirement for the broadest practicable competition, is primarily the agency's responsibility. GAO has consistently held that, in technical disputes, a protester's disagreement with an agency's opinion does not invalidate the agency's opinion. GAO did not believe that the protester successfully carried the burden of proving its case, because it did not show the expert technical opinion of the agency to be unreasonable; therefore, GAO could not hold that the specifications in this case were unduly restrictive. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

118304

Tobacco Program's Production Rights and Effects on Competition. CED-82-70; B-205935. April 23, 1982. Released May 5, 1982. 28 pp, plus 4 appendices (4 pp.).

Report to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Income (1729)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture Farm Income Stabilization (351 0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture Commodity Credit Corp

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations, Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Sen Thomas F. Eagleton; Sen Mark O. Hatfield.

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1281 et seq.), Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98) Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed certain aspects of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's (ASCS) flue-cured and burley-cured tobacco programs to determine: (1) by occupation or source of income, the owners of tobacco allotments and quotas that are leased or rented; (2) the amounts and average costs of the leased or rented allotments and quotas; (3) the program's long-term effects on the competitiveness of U.S.-grown tobacco and on farmers' income; (4) the potential for averting future loan program costs by authorizing the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to adjust price-support levels for the various kinds of tobacco; and (5) the amount of the tobacco that warehouses market as floor sweepings.

Findings/Conclusions: In the six areas and regions studied, farmers who grow tobacco, the program's intended beneficiaries, owned only 40 percent of the farms with allotments and marketing quotas. Of these owners, about 26 percent rented and 42 percent leased their allotments and quotas to others. Prices for leases ranged from 25 to 80 cents a pound for flue-cured tobacco and from 25 to 90 cents a pound for burley-cured tobacco. USDA estimated that the 1981 share-rental rates averaged 39 cents a pound for flue-cured tobacco and 51 cents a pound for burley-cured tobacco. When leasing was first authorized in 1961, USDA estimated that about 2 percent of the tobacco allotment and quota owners would lease the rights to others. By 1981, about 57 percent of the quota owners in flue-cured, tobacco-producing areas and 27 percent of the quota owners in the burley-cured, tobacco-producing areas had leased their rights. The legislated price-support formula, which establishes minimum prices for U.S. tobacco, has increased the price of U.S. tobacco without regard for changes in production costs and competing countries' prices, making U.S. tobacco less competitive in both U.S. and world markets. Authority for the Secretary of Agriculture to adjust the price-support levels for various kinds of tobacco could help make U.S. tobacco more competitive and curtail the amounts of low-quality tobacco coming under Government loan. Large losses have been incurred through Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) interest repayment practices and the fact that, prior to April 1981, CCC made loans at below-market interest rates.

118309

Water Issues Facing the Nation: An Overview. CED-82-83. May 6, 1982. 26 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.).

Staff Study by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs (2500).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of the Army; Department of Agriculture.

Authority: H.R. 2606 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: As part of a continuing assessment of areas of national concern and interest, GAO reviewed water-related programs and

activities for planning, developing, and managing the Nation's water resources, including the development, operation, and maintenance for the national waterway system. **Findings/Conclusions:** While basic water issues never really change, their relative importance does. Presently, five issues have been identified by GAO as requiring immediate attention: (1) what the Federal Government can do to help the Nation meet its water needs and make optimal use of its existing water resources; (2) whether water projects are being developed and rehabilitated in the most economical and efficient manner; (3) whether water projects are efficiently, effectively, economically, and safely operated and maintained; (4) whether the Nation's navigation system can be developed, operated, maintained, and managed in more effective, economical, and efficient ways; and (5) whether cost allocations, repayment, and financing policies for Federal water resources projects are effectively meeting today's needs. GAO feels that, during the next decade, the following factors will greatly impact on national water resources matters: (1) the emphasis on reducing Federal spending, (2) the movement toward greater cost recovery from water project users and also toward a greater State, local, and private role in developing, maintaining, and financing water resources and navigation projects; (3) the increasing threat of major water shortages; and (4) the impact of the energy crisis.

118310

Environmental Protection: Agenda for the 1980's. CED-82-73. May 5, 1982. 36 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.).

Staff Study by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs (2200).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304 0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Authority: Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National), Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, Clean Water Act of 1977, Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Water Pollution Control Act.

Abstract: GAO prepared a staff study as part of its continuing reassessment of areas of national concern and interest and identified environmental protection problems and issues most in need of attention. The review will influence the scope and direction of GAO audit efforts involving pollution control programs and activities. **Findings/Conclusions:** Environmental pollution affects the daily lives of all Americans in some form or manner. Excessive pollutants introduced into the environment have an adverse impact on environmental quality, on human health, and on other factors important to human life. The United States has made major efforts to control pollution since the early 1970's and has realized some significant accomplishments. However, there have also been shortcomings: certain environmental problems continue to persist and grow worse while new ones continue to appear. Recent environmental disasters involving such things as hazardous waste dumps, pesticide contamination, dying lakes, and radiation releases have made the public increasingly aware of the major health hazards associated with the pollution of our natural resources.

118329

Information on the U.S. Employment Service's Programs, Activities, and Functions. HRD-82-71; B-207208. April 30, 1982. Released May 10, 1982. 6 pp. plus 2 appendices (30 pp.).

Report to Rep. Carl D. Perkins, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor; by Gregory J. Ahart, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Federally Sponsored or Assisted Employment and Training Programs: Job Service's Assistance to the Unemployed in Finding Jobs (3224).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Training and Employment (504.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Labor; Manpower Administration; United States Employment Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Education and Labor; Rep. Carl D. Perkins

Authority: Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973, Wagner-Peyser Act (Federal Employment Service).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on the various functions performed by the U.S. Employment Service, how existing automated systems are used, the ramifications of recent budget cutbacks on the programs, the characteristics of job applicants and Employment Service referrals and placements, a profile of the employment opportunities offered by the Service, employer's opinions of the Service, and linkages between the Service and other employment and training programs. **Findings/Conclusions:** The functions performed by the Service include labor-exchange functions as well as non-labor-exchange functions. Many local officials and employers believe that non-labor-exchange functions detract from the labor-exchange mission. The extent and use of automated systems varies considerably among States and local offices. Nationwide, all States have three systems. None of the three States surveyed plans to expand its use of automation due to scarce resources. Reduced funding has resulted in staff level reductions and the closure of some Service offices. Various measures are planned or have been taken to streamline Service operations; however, Federal requirements limit flexibility as to the use of the resources. Job applicants registered by the Service are usually younger and less well educated than the general labor force, because the Service is often viewed as an exchange medium for only low-paying, low-skilled jobs. Jobs listed with the Service are most often in nonprofessional lesser-skilled occupations and are frequently temporary. Employers contacted would rather use alternative sources such as want ads, private agencies, or their own recruiting efforts. However, employers who had used the Service generally had a favorable impression of it. The Service is usually integrated with local employment or training programs through financial or nonfinancial agreements which reduce duplications of applicant referrals.

118338

[The Federal Government Can Save \$1.7 Million Annually by Eliminating Strip Stamps]. GGD-82-60; B-207193. May 7, 1982. 3 pp. plus 1 enclosure (2 pp.).

Report to Donald T. Regan, Secretary, Department of the Treasury; by William J. Anderson, Director, GAO General Government Division.

Refer to Testimony, July 25, 1983, Accession Number 122044.

Issue Area: Tax Administration: Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government Non-Income Based Tax Administration (2767).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Tax Administration (803.1).

Organization Concerned: Internal Revenue Service; Department of the Treasury; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; Treasury-Postal Service and General Government Subcommittee; House Committee on Ways and Means; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Finance.

Authority: Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Distilled Spirits Tax Revision Act of 1979 (26 U.S.C. 5001 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the administration of excise taxes on distilled spirits. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that Government-issued strip stamps which are placed on containers of distilled spirits no longer serve their intended purpose. The Federal Government could avoid the possibility of public misinterpretation of the strip stamps' significance and save at least \$1.7 million annually by eliminating the stamps. The Internal Revenue Code provides for the use of strip stamps which are printed at the annual cost of \$1.7 million and are distributed to distillers and bottlers at no charge. Although the code authorizes the use of alternative closure devices, the stamps are the most frequently used devices. Recent legislation significantly changed the Federal regulation and taxation of distilled spirits. It eliminated the need for control over certain operations at distilling plants by Federal employees and provided for the determination of taxes on distilled spirits before bottling. The strip stamp no longer signifies that the tax on the spirits has been paid or that the spirits have been lawfully bottled. Consequently, the public may be misled into thinking of the strip stamps as the Government's stamp of approval of the product. Quality assurance can be provided equally well by alternative sealing devices provided by the distiller. However, distillers have not adopted the alternative devices because the Government provides strip stamps free of charge. Trade association officials are opposed to the elimination of the Government-supplied strip stamps because of the potential of increased costs, danger to tax revenue, and the requirement of State stamps. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Treasury should revise the regulations to eliminate Government-supplied strip stamps while retaining a requirement that bottlers and distributors provide and use approved closure devices. If it is decided that approved closure devices are unnecessary, the Secretary of the Treasury should request legislation to repeal section 5205 and related provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

118347

[Federal Water Conservation in the Metropolitan Washington Area]. PLRD-82-78; B-207225. May 12, 1982. 2 pp.

Report to Rep. Frank R. Wolf; by Werner Grosshans, (for Donald J. Horan, Director), GAO Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division.

Issue Area: Facilities and Material Management: Effectiveness of Federal Agencies in Operating and Maintaining Their Facilities (0725).

Contact: Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division

Budget Function: General Government: General Property and Records Management (804.0).

Organization Concerned: General Services Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Frank R. Wolf.

Abstract: GAO reported on Federal Government water conservation and cost control in the metropolitan Washington area. **Findings/Conclusions:** In 1978, the General Services Administration (GSA) established a water conservation program which reduced Federal water consumption nationally from 5.2 billion gallons in 1977 to 4.6 billion gallons in 1980 and reduced its consumption from 2.6 billion gallons in 1977 to 1.7 gallons in 1981 and replaced worn spigots, installed water conservation devices, and recirculated fountain water. There is only one single-pass, water-cooled air conditioning system which uses city water in operation in the region. This is a small system located in the White House. GSA has replaced other single-pass systems. Some systems use water pumped from and returned to the Potomac River. The use of single-pass, water-cooled air conditioning systems using city water is restricted to small systems. Federal buildings in the Washington suburbs are individually metered. In the District of Columbia, GSA has 88 buildings or complexes which have water meters. GSA feels that it would be hard to make agencies responsible for water consumption because, in many instances,

more than one agency is located in a building served by a single meter and water consumption is one of the factors considered in determining the standard level of users charge

118354

[Protest of Army Award to Low Bidder]. B-206810.2. May 10, 1982. 3 pp

Decision re: Tombs and Sons, Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General)

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Tombs and Sons, Inc., Integrity Management International, Inc.; Department of the Army

Authority: D A.R. 1-311. D.A.R. 1-703(b)(1) B-204735 (1979) B-203742 2 (1981). B-206834 (1982). 15 U.S.C. 637(b).

Abstract: An incumbent firm protested any award to the awardee under an Army invitation for bids (IFB) to provide food services. The IFB was set aside for small business concerns. The protester contended that the awardee did not meet the small business size standard listed in the IFB and that its bid price was too low to permit the awardee to perform the contract requirements. The protester argued that the awardee had an unfair competitive advantage because, through a protest that the awardee filed with the Small Business Administration (SBA) against the protester's size status with respect to another solicitation, the awardee learned what the protester's total receipts were under the prior contract. GAO held that: (1) it does not have authority to determine small business size status for Federal procurements; (2) the allegation that the bid price was too low to permit satisfactory performance does not provide a valid basis to challenge an award to a bidder that is determined to be responsible; and (3) the incumbent's protest that another bidder gained an unfair competitive advantage under the solicitation for the new contract was denied since such information is generally available to the public, and both parties had the same opportunity to offer prices for the current contract based on knowledge of prior contract prices and receipts. Accordingly, the protest was dismissed in part and denied in part.

118378

Improved Planning and Management of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project Is Needed. MASAD-82-35; B-206945. May 14, 1982. 2 pp. plus 1 appendix (9 pp.).

Report to John O. Marsh, Jr., Secretary, Department of the Army; by Donald E. Day, (for Jr. Walton H. Sheley, Director), GAO Mission Analysis and Systems Acquisition Division.

Issue Area: Procurement of Major Systems; Steps To Achieve the Proper Balance Between Development and Acquisition Costs, Design According to Cost Constraints, and Ownership Costs (3012).

Contact: Mission Analysis and Systems Acquisition Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Department of the Army.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on the Budget; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Budget; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Authority: Flood Control Act of 1948 (P.L. 80-858).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the effectiveness of Corps of Engineers project planning and management for the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project which the Corps currently esti-

mates will cost about \$2.2 billion. **Findings/Conclusions**: GAO believes that the Corps' planning and management of the project needs to be improved. The project plan is inadequate, because it contains proposed work that will require major modifications or may never be done due to potential adverse environmental impacts or lack of support by the local sponsor. The Flood Control Act of 1968 expanded the project to provide for increased storage and conservation of water and for improved water distribution. Some authorized project components were placed on an inactive status or deleted from project plans or cost estimates and may never be completed. Both the Corps and the State of Florida are currently in the process of identifying and evaluating many alternatives to alleviate water supply concerns. The 1999 completion estimate is extremely optimistic. Since long-term priorities and valid schedule milestones have not been established for the remaining work to ensure that it is completed in the most orderly, efficient, and effective manner. The funding levels used by the Corps to estimate the completion schedule were too high. The uncertain scope of the project has prevented the Corps from preparing and reporting meaningful cost estimates, since the estimates contain costs for work which may not be done and do not recognize costs for new work. In addition, inflation has been understated in the cost estimates. **Recommendation To Agencies**: The Secretary of the Army should require the Chief of Engineers, based on the best information available, to identify and set long-term priorities for project segments that the Corps and local sponsors agree are essential to complete the project and should either place the remaining work segments in a deferred or inactive status or submit them for deauthorization. The Secretary of the Army should require the Chief of Engineers, based on the best information available, to provide Congress in the next annual budget submission a restructured project plan containing a realistic completion date, a revised cost estimate, and priorities for the remaining major work segments.

118407

Status of Federal Agencies' Implementation of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. CED-82-74; B-206534. April 19, 1982. 1 p. plus 6 appendices (37 pp.).

Report to Rep. John F. Seiberling, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Public Lands and National Parks Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Land Use Planning and Control: Effectiveness of the Use of the Land Being Planned, Managed, and Coordinated for Alaska (2326).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Land Management; National Park Service; Alaska; United States Fish and Wildlife Service; Department of Agriculture; Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Public Lands and National Parks Subcommittee; *Rep.* John F. Seiberling.

Authority: Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (P.L. 96-487). Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508). Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (P.L. 92-203). Land Policy and Management Act (P.L. 94-579). Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. 431). H.R. 39 (96th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the progress Federal agencies were making in implementing the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act. **Findings/Conclusions**: The review provided information on the administration and management of the new and expanded conservation units; the implementation of the Act's special land-use provisions, special studies provisions, and land transfer conveyance provisions; and budget proposals and staffing.

118410

[*Assistance to Beginning Farmers*]. May 14, 1982. 7 pp. plus 3 enclosures (7 pp.).

Report to Richard E. Lyng, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture, by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effects of Scarcity in Farm Input Resources (1726); Federal Oversight of Financial Institutions: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (3951), Domestic Housing and Community Development: Assisting Community Development Through Loans and Grants to Businesses (2110).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations, Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. Authority: Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-592).

Abstract: Because of concerns raised about the obstacles faced by beginning farmers in obtaining financing to enter agriculture and the declining number of farms in the United States, GAO reviewed Federal and State efforts to help beginning farmers. **Findings/Conclusions:** Federal assistance programs for people entering farming consist primarily of loans and loan guarantees. Eleven bills were introduced in the 96th and 97th Congresses to target Federal programs to beginning farmers. Although most of the programs in 14 States that assist beginning farmers are also loan and loan guarantee programs, two State programs provide land for new farmers. The current Department of Agriculture (USDA) analysis of farm trends describes net changes in farm numbers, but it does not provide data on numbers of farmers entering or leaving farming, and there are little data on the impact of existing farm programs on beginning farmers or the farm sector. Without an understanding of the changes in the farmer population and the impact of existing programs on beginning farmers, it is difficult for Congress to consider changes to farm programs that would successfully assist the beginning farmer. Raw data are available nationwide at county agricultural offices that can be used to determine the numbers of farmers entering and leaving farming and to obtain information about the numbers of people wishing to enter farming. USDA could collect and tabulate this data within existing resources and provide farmer demographic information, a profile of the beginning farmer situation, a basis for evaluating the existing programs' impact on beginning farmers, and data for evaluating proposed legislation. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct USDA to analyze trends in farmer numbers and target Government programs to the desired group of farmers. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct USDA to evaluate the impact of existing programs which help farmers enter the agricultural sector. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct USDA to tabulate data on qualified persons applying for loans to enter farming through Federal programs and the number actually receiving loans. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct USDA to revise the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service recordkeeping system to tabulate available data on farmers entering and leaving the agricultural sector.

118412

Savings Are Possible Through Better Management of Government-Owned Dairy Products. CED-82-79; B-207223. May 18, 1982. 2 pp. plus 2 appendices (14 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.) Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) policies and procedures for storing dairy products acquired through the dairy price-support program. The purpose of the review was to evaluate how these products were managed, because the government-owned inventories of butter, cheese, and nonfat dry milk increased substantially during fiscal years 1980 and 1981, and these products comprise the largest share of government-owned commodities. **Findings/Conclusions:** USDA successfully located sufficient storage space for the dairy products, which increased from about 705 million pounds in fall 1979 to more than 2 billion pounds by fall 1981. GAO concluded that USDA would realize an estimated annual savings of up to \$1.4 million if it purchased its requirements for 1-pound packages of butter directly from suppliers. Butter in 1-pound packages is used in the domestic school lunch and food-for-the-needy programs and is supplied by repackaging blocks of bulk butter. USDA did not act on previous recommendations to buy 1-pound packages of butter because of the large inventory of bulk butter on hand and its concern that the older stock would deteriorate before it was used. GAO concluded that warehouses storing the dairy products are examined more often than necessary. It was estimated that approximately 2600 staff hours of warehouse examiners' time could be saved annually if the frequency of examinations were reduced from three times to two times a year for warehouses that have good performance records. This would provide time for the decreasing staff of examiners to cope with an increasing workload. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to establish a policy to buy the Department's requirements for 1-pound packages of butter directly from suppliers whenever possible. The Administrator should implement this policy immediately so that part of the requirement for the next full quarter could be acquired in this manner based on an analysis of projected needs and present inventory. For each succeeding quarter, the Administrator should reevaluate government-owned butter inventories to determine the amount such purchases can be increased so that eventually all requirements can be obtained by direct purchases. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to identify those warehouses that have good performance records and reduce the examination frequency for these warehouses to twice a year.

118414

Information on Programs Involved in the President's Swap Proposal. CED-82-71; B-207111. April 15, 1982. 7 pp. plus 6 appendices (49 pp.).

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Baltas E. Birkle, (for Henry Eschwege, Director), GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Alternative Mechanisms Available To Provide Food to Low-Income Target Populations (1724); Health Programs: Effective Coordination and Management of Federal

Health Programs To Assure That Health Costs Are Contained (1222); Income Security and Social Services: Financing and Controlling the Cost of Cash Assistance (1334)

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604 0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided statistical information on the Food Stamp, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and Medicaid Programs which described. program growth by State, differences in benefit levels among the States, degree of correlation between program growth and unemployment, administrative structure of each program, the extent to which recipients of the Food Stamp Program receive benefits from the AFDC and Medicaid Programs, and projections for future program growth **Findings/Conclusions:** The proposed New Federalism Program would transfer the responsibility for the Food Stamp and AFDC Programs to the States and, in return, the Federal Government would assume all costs of the Medicaid Program. However, this proposed transfer may be deferred or dropped altogether. All three programs have experienced a large dollar growth over the past years. The number of Food Stamp Program participants has increased, but the increase has tended to level out over the last 2 years. The number of Medicaid and AFDC Program participants has remained relatively stable over the period. The Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act will play a major role in holding down future increases in Food Stamp Program costs by restricting program eligibility. The benefit levels of the AFDC and Medicaid Programs vary widely from State to State while the Food Stamp Program has uniform, national eligibility and benefit schedules. The unemployment rate affects program growth for all three programs but affects the Food Stamp Program the most. All three programs are jointly administered by the State and Federal Governments. The Federal Government establishes eligibility criteria, shares administrative costs, and pays for a portion of the program benefits. The States conduct most of the Programs' administration activities. Individuals can and often do receive benefits simultaneously from any of the three programs. The Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget have made different cost projections for all three programs through 1987

118447

A More Comprehensive Approach Is Needed To Clean Up the Great Lakes. CED-82-63; B-203850. May 21, 1982. 60 pp plus 12 appendices (77 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Environmental Protection Regulatory Strategies (2208); International Affairs: Use of Non-National Areas: Oceans, Space, and Land Masses (0615).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment; Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Agriculture; Department of Commerce; Department of State; International Joint Commission--United States and Canada; Canada.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations; HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee

on Public Works and Transportation, *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations; HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works, Congress

Authority: Ocean Pollution Research and Development and Monitoring Planning Act (P L 95-273) Clean Water Act of 1977. Municipal Wastewater Treatment Construction Grant Amendments of 1981 (P L 97-117). P.L. 96-108. H.R. 3600 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO made a review to determine whether the United States is meeting the objectives of the U.S.-Canadian Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, although the Great Lakes are cleaner, the United States is finding it difficult to meet the objectives of the Agreement. U.S. efforts have been hampered by a lack of effective strategies for dealing with Great Lakes water quality problems, a lack of knowledge about the extent of pollution problems and the impact of control programs, and a need for improved management of the Great Lakes pollution cleanup activities. There have been unrealistic timetables for constructing facilities, problems in obtaining and using federal grant funds, a lack of local support for construction activities, and budget reductions. Information is lacking about the nature, extent, and source of toxic pollution. State and areawide plans to address pollution from agricultural, forestry, and urban runoff have not been comprehensive and may not be completed as federal funding has been cut off. Current water quality monitoring is not providing the data needed to address the pollution problems due to a lack of funds. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the principal U.S. agency for carrying out water quality activities and implementing the Agreement, has broad and complex responsibilities requiring cooperation with a variety of federal, state, and local agencies as well as with the International Joint Commission and Canadian environmental agencies. EPA has had difficulty obtaining this cooperation which is needed to assure that the Great Lakes water quality program can compete with other national issues. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Administrator of EPA, should determine: (1) whether the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement objectives and commitments are overly ambitious; and (2) whether sufficient funding to meet Agreement objectives and commitments can be provided given current economic and budgetary conditions. Congress should pass legislation currently pending which would amend the National Ocean Pollution Research and Development and Monitoring Planning Act of 1978 to require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to establish a Great Lakes research office. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of EPA should direct the Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) to develop a comprehensive plan and strategy to address phosphorus, nonpoint, and toxic pollution problems in the Great Lakes Basin. The Administrator should direct GLNPO to: revise its interagency agreement to include other federal agencies with responsibilities for nonpoint programs affecting the Great Lakes; serve as the coordinating mechanism for Great Lakes Basin water quality plans being developed by areawide agencies and the states and consolidate the individual state and areawide plans into an overall basin plan; and enter into an interagency agreement with NOAA to define the responsibilities of NOAA and EPA concerning Great Lakes research activities. The Administrator of EPA should direct the GLNPO to develop a surveillance and monitoring plan for the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes. Such a plan should: (1) delineate the agencies involved in Great Lakes surveillance and monitoring activities; (2) include methods and procedures to ensure that monitoring activities are carried out promptly and that the data gathered are complete and consistent in order to provide meaningful evaluations and comparative analyses; and (3) include procedures to ensure that U.S. and Canadian monitoring efforts are consistent. The Administrator of EPA should raise GLNPO

to a high level in the organization and give it the authority and resources necessary to (1) develop and implement specific action plans to carry out U.S. responsibilities under the Agreement, (2) coordinate internal EPA actions aimed at improving Great Lakes water quality; (3) coordinate with other federal agencies and the states to ensure their input in developing water quality strategies and their support in achieving Agreement objectives; and (4) serve as the liaison with and provide input to the International Joint Commission and EPA counterparts in Canada. The Administrator of EPA should direct GLNPO and the various EPA organizational elements involved in Great Lakes activities to enter into agreements specifically delineating: (1) the Great Lakes duties and responsibilities of each entity; (2) timeframes for carrying out assigned duties and responsibilities; and (3) the resources to be committed to these duties and responsibilities

118452

Progress Made in Federal Human Nutrition Research Planning and Coordination; Some Improvements Needed. CED-82-56; B-206828. May 21, 1982. 54 pp. plus 9 appendices (27 pp.).

Report to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., House Committee on Science and Technology: Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee; Rep. Doug Walgren, Chairman, House Committee on Science and Technology: Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Adequacy and Focus of Federal Support of Human Nutrition Research (1756); Health Programs: Extent of the Development, Dissemination, and Use of Health Information in the Health Care System (1267).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0); Health: Health Research (552.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services; Office of Science and Technology Policy; National Institutes of Health.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Science and Technology: Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.; Rep. Doug Walgren.

Authority: Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113) Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1979 (P.L. 95-448) Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on the planning and coordination of federally supported human nutrition research. **Findings/Conclusions:** Considerable progress has been made within and among federal human nutrition research departments and agencies since Congress called for improved coordination in the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has been a major contributor to, and a catalyst for, improved coordination of nutrition research and has set the groundwork for developing an improved federal coordinated nutrition research planning system. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have established nutrition coordinators and policy and coordination groups to deal with crosscutting nutrition issues. GAO believes that these coordination efforts should be continued and maintained as some of the federal departments reorganize or revise their nutrition

research programs. Coordination within USDA is critically needed because of the recent decentralization of its nutrition information functions from its nutrition research functions. Nutrition research departments and agencies need to more clearly plan their research efforts with others through a federal nutrition research plan. An OSTP report on human nutrition research is a first step toward developing such a plan, but the six areas discussed in the report should be developed and expanded into a single research plan which would include an assessment of needs, priorities, and strategies. Existing agency nutrition research plans are either too narrow in scope or are missing certain key planning components. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should amend Memorandum No. 2030, dated April 9, 1981, which established the Human Nutrition Board of Scientific Counselors, to include USDA officials and ex officio Board members and exclude them from serving as chairman and vice chairman of the Board. The Secretary of Agriculture should revise the charter of the Human Nutrition Board of Scientific Counselors to reflect the USDA reorganization, including the nutrition activities transferred to the Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services. The Director of OSTP should direct the OSTP Joint Subcommittee on Human Nutrition Research to develop a federal nutrition research plan by updating and expanding its December 1980 report on federally supported human nutrition research. In updating the report, the Subcommittee and the federal departments and agencies should work together to develop specific goals, objectives, and strategies and to identify the responsibilities of the federal departments and agencies and the required resources and timeframes to accomplish the research goals. The Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, in developing their plan, should address the need to obtain expert and user advice and comments from nutritionists and other scientists; library, computer, and budget specialists; congressional staff; and others external to the federal departments to help the Secretaries develop a system that will provide research information and cost data that is timely, useful, comprehensive, reliable, and widely accepted by Congress, the executive agencies, and the nutrition community. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Director of the National Institutes of Health to: (1) include other federal nutrition research center representatives as participants in the planned Clinical Nutrition Research Unit (CNRU) site visits, or revisits; and (2) prepare a summary report on the CNRU reviews and provide the information to other federal nutrition research administrators and other interested parties, such as the appropriate congressional committees and the scientific community. This report should include an assessment of all seven CNRU's

118459

Use of Scrip Versus Cash in Making Change for Food Stamp Purchases. CED-82-89; B-207528 May 21, 1982. Released May 25, 1982. 4 pp.

Report to Rep. G. William Whitehurst; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. G. William Whitehurst.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO reviewed information on the use of scrip or credit slips instead of cash as change in food stamp purchases. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, provides that eligible households using food stamps to

purchase food may receive cash as change, provided it does not equal or exceed the value of the lowest coupon denomination issued. Surveys were conducted to obtain information on whether food stamp participants were abusing the cash change rule through small purchases. The principle conclusions of the survey were: (1) cash change given out for small purchases represented less than 1 percent of the total dollar value of food stamp redemptions by the surveyed stores, (2) small purchases of 25 cents or less represented about 12 percent of the total number of food stamp purchases at the surveyed stores, and (3) about 56 percent of the store personnel surveyed said that they did not have any experience with food stamp customers making small purchases of 25 cents or less, and about 20 per cent said that cash change abuse was a significant problem. This survey showed that widespread abuse of the cash change rule did not exist. Four options were identified for making change for food stamp purchases: (1) continue to give cash change, (2) return to the use of scrip, (3) use a combination of cash and scrip; and (4) require participants to pay any cost over an even dollar amount or purchase additional food.

118461

What Can Be Done To Improve Nutrition Education Efforts in the Schools. CED-82-65; B-207254. May 25, 1982. 35 pp. plus 8 appendices (27 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Efficient Stimulation of Agricultural Research and Development (1735).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education (501.0); Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Research and General Education Aids (503.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Education, Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Education and Labor; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: School Lunch Act (P.L. 91-248). Child Nutrition Act. Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Vocational Education Act. P.L. 97-35.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the importance of nutrition education in the schools as it relates to: (1) improving eating habits, (2) reducing food waste, and (3) aiding or reducing the need for other federally supported nutrition education activities. GAO also discussed the status of nutrition education in the schools and what the Federal Government can do to help improve it. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that neither the Department of Agriculture (USDA) nor the Department of Education have gathered information on federally funded nutrition education projects for assessment and dissemination of the results to State and local education agencies. USDA claimed that it lacked Nutrition Education and Training Program funds to reproduce and disseminate information and that it has no criteria to assess the quality of nutrition education information. Both USDA and Education have systems to gather and disseminate information, so no new mechanism should be needed. USDA requires participating States to evaluate the Nutrition Education and Training Program's effectiveness and specify objectives based on participants' needs. Three of the four States GAO visited did not evaluate their program's effectiveness or specify objectives on participants'

knowledge, attitudes, or behavior. This occurred because USDA did not provide adequate guidance or training to States on evaluations and objectives. As a result, States had difficulty identifying evaluation materials. Coordination efforts are weak at all levels: between USDA and Education, and within the USDA Nutrition Education and Training Program and private sector groups such as the dairy council. Many teachers are not prepared to teach nutrition upon entering the teaching profession, because few States require teachers to take nutrition courses. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should convene a panel of experts to develop guidelines for evaluating the quality of available nutrition education efforts for use in the schools. The panel should include teachers, food service personnel, nutritionists, system design experts, and other appropriate persons. The Secretary of Agriculture should share these guidelines with interested State and local education agencies. The Secretary of Agriculture should systematically gather and evaluate to the extent possible information on nutrition education projects that meet the established guidelines. The Secretary of Agriculture should provide State and local education agencies and other interested parties access to the evaluation results and nutrition education information meeting the guidelines. Department of Agriculture and Department of Education dissemination systems should be adequate for this purpose. The Secretary of Agriculture should aid interested States by developing general program goals and comprehensive guidance on how to specify program objectives for students, teachers, and food service personnel in the areas of knowledge, attitude, and behavior. The Secretary of Agriculture should aid interested States by developing evaluation guidance for measuring changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. The Secretary of Agriculture should convene a panel of experts to help develop the above guidance and establish program goals. These experts should include nutritionists, teachers, school administrators, education evaluators, and other appropriate groups. Once USDA develops the guidance, States would have the option of using it or of developing their own. The Secretary of Agriculture should coordinate the USDA nutrition education activities for the schools with the Department of Education's nutrition education activities. This coordination should include, among other things: (1) identifying and sharing with interested State and local education agencies the extent and results of successful nutrition education activities to prevent unnecessary duplication; and (2) developing a unified strategy to reach as many students as possible needing nutrition education and the coordination should occur at the Federal level, be encouraged at the State level, and at all government levels should include the private sector, such as the dairy council. The Secretary of Agriculture should discuss with State education agencies involved in administering child nutrition programs and in providing nutrition education in the schools what approaches might be taken to help ensure that teachers have the basic skills needed to teach nutrition. One topic that should be included in the discussion is the possibility of establishing for all elementary schoolteachers in such subjects as home economics, health, and science: (1) nutrition education as a prerequisite for certification of new teachers; and (2) competency levels for nutrition education and providing in service training for teachers needing help in achieving these competency levels.

118497

Agricultural Marketing Act Inspections Should Be Administered by Single USDA Agency. CED-82-69; B-207201. May 21, 1982. 37 pp. plus 4 appendices (5 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Improvements in Commodity Grading Efforts (1720).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Marketing Service; Department of Agriculture: Federal Grain Inspection Service

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.*

Authority: Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.). Grain Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 71 et seq.). P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture (USDA) food and inspection grading activities carried out under the Agriculture Marketing Act of 1946. Responsibility within USDA for these activities is currently shared by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS); GAO also reviewed this division of responsibility. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that FGIS relies on local individuals under annual personnel service contracts called contract samplers rather than its own employees to do contract compliance inspections. AMS provides contract compliance services for most Act products and it usually has employees near or in the immediate area of plants under FGIS jurisdiction who could absorb most of the FGIS workload. Therefore, the AMS employees could probably provide higher quality and more reliable services. Since testing processed grain products in connection with contract compliance inspections is the primary mission of the FGIS laboratory, it could also be transferred to AMS, because AMS has three laboratories that do similar testing. FGIS now diverts a certain amount of testing work to private laboratories to keep them under contract in case their facility cannot handle peak workloads. FGIS provides other services under the Act besides contract compliance services. GAO believes that transferring the Act functions would be desirable, even though such a transfer would not necessarily result in higher quality or more efficient services. Without these Act responsibilities, FGIS could devote more attention to its primary grain inspection mission and could better maintain that program's integrity despite staff cutbacks. FGIS already has personnel at major ports. Therefore, it could provide export inspection services more efficiently. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should transfer to AMS responsibility for inspecting and grading commodities covered by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 that are now assigned to FGIS. The Secretary of Agriculture should transfer a sufficient number of FGIS personnel with expertise in grading rice and other commodities which FGIS now grades under the Act. The Secretary of Agriculture should transfer the FGIS commodity testing laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland. The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Administrators of FGIS and AMS to execute a memorandum of understanding providing for FGIS personnel to continue inspection and testing services they now provide on exported commodities. The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Administrator of AMS to establish a formal policy and system for maximizing crossutilization of AMS personnel on contract compliance inspection work. The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Administrator of FGIS to either: (1) transfer grain research work now done by the Beltsville laboratory to the FGIS laboratory in Grandview, Missouri, or (2) effect a memorandum of agreement with the Administrator of AMS providing for the Beltsville laboratory to continue this work on a reimbursable basis.

118501

[Water Diverted From Lake Tahoe Has Been Within Authorized Levels]. CED-82-85; B-207402. May 19, 1982. 6 pp.

Report to Rep. George Miller; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effectiveness of Cost Allocation, Repayment, and Financing Policies for Federal Water Resource Projects (2517).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. George Miller*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the management of water releases from the Lake Tahoe Dam to determine how release rates are established and to determine if such releases have met or exceeded the established rates during the last 10 years. **Findings/Conclusions:** Essentially, releases from the Lake Tahoe Dam are regulated by court decree and monitored by a court-appointed water master. According to the water master, releases from Lake Tahoe are made only when flows in the river below the dam are not sufficient to meet the Floriston rates. When releases are made, they are the minimum required to meet these rates. By regulating releases in this manner, the water master ensures that the lake is maintained at its highest level. Records show that, during the past 10 years, releases from the lake have not resulted in improper reductions in its level; only water stored in the reservoir of the lake has been released. Water contained in the lake below its natural rim has not been withdrawn for downstream use since 1934. Although the level of the lake fell below its natural rim during the 1977 drought, no pumping was requested, and the lake has recovered from the effects of the drought. A Federal court recently authorized release of water in excess of the Floriston rates to preclude possible flooding of the shoreline. If the Floriston rates were not exceeded, it was projected that the lake would crest well above the maximum authorized.

118512

[Food Stamp Program Application Processing Time]. CED-82-87; B-207529. May 21, 1982. 5 pp.

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.*

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO was asked to provide any readily available information on how long States take to process nonexpedited service or regular cases in the Food Stamp Program and whether processing time for these cases would be shortened if expedited service were eliminated. **Findings/Conclusions:** State officials provided GAO with estimates of the average number of days it took to process an application or the number of days in which most applications were processed. GAO found that 31 States and the District of Columbia processed regular cases within 15 calendar days. In 8 other States, cases were processed within 22 days and, in 10 States, cases were processed within 30 days as required by food stamp legislation. The number of households applying for food stamps under expedited service varied greatly among the States. In 34 States and the District of Columbia, the percentage of all new cases receiving expedited service ranged from 4

percent to 75 percent. In about half of these States and in the District of Columbia, at least 25 percent of all new cases were receiving expedited service. Food stamp officials in 19 States said that eliminating expedited service would help reduce processing time for regular cases. Officials in 30 other States and the District of Columbia said that eliminating this service would not affect the processing time for regular cases

118516

[Reasons for High Food Prices in the U.S. Virgin Islands]. CED-82-93; B-207434. May 28, 1982. 12 pp.

Report to Del. Ron De Lugo; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Action To Improve Efficiency in Food Marketing (1740).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Labor; Office of Personnel Management.

Congressional Relevance: Del. Ron De Lugo.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO held discussions with, and obtained documentary information from, officials of a number of different sources to determine why food prices in the Virgin Islands are so high. **Findings/Conclusions:** Nearly all products consumed, processed, and sold in the Virgin Islands must be procured from off-island areas. The majority of island freight is transported by ship via Puerto Rico where the cargo is often off-loaded and reloaded onto smaller vessels for shipment to the islands. Cargo between Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands moves primarily in one direction only, thus sufficient revenue must be generated from the cargo moving to the Virgin Islands to cover the costs of the round trip. There are only two major supermarket chains in the islands, and many of the smaller grocery stores purchase their merchandise from the two large chains for resale. In December 1981, retail prices of commodities in the Virgin Islands averaged 45 percent higher than food prices in Washington, D.C. Poor food quality on the islands is attributed to the rigors of handling in shipment. GAO found that the high cost of food on the islands can be attributed to high shipping charges, price domination by major supermarkets, high rates of shrinkage, high operating costs, inefficiencies due to the small size of the market, affluence, tourism, a high incidence of food stamps in the islands, and little consumer resistance to high prices. Better management of food transportation and marketing, increased agricultural production, increased exports, and the development of a higher level of consumer sensitivity and organization could alleviate some of the problems.

118521

Food Conservation Should Receive Greater Attention in AID Agricultural Assistance Policies and Programs. ID-82-29; B-207383. June 3, 1982. 37 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency of U.S. Efforts To Alleviate Food Problems in Developing Countries (1734); International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Republic of Panama; Republic of the Philippines; Republic of Senegal; United Nations: Food and Agriculture Organization.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations, Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations, Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1980

Abstract: Inefficient agricultural systems cost developing countries billions of dollars annually in lost food. Previously, GAO has recommended that the Agency for International Development (AID) give more attention to the storage, distribution, and marketing systems in these countries. GAO conducted this review to determine what actions AID has taken and should take to reduce food loss. GAO examined agricultural policies and guidelines, reviewed the projects in Senegal and the Philippines, and considered the results of one project in Panama. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that food conservation is an area that requires AID to work closely with the host countries in dealing with problems which limit performance of current projects. AID should also provide incentives to reduce food losses and initiate stronger programs through its missions. By adopting policies which foster consideration of post-harvest storage, handling, processing, and marketing in conjunction with production projects, and by providing guidance to the overseas missions for developing specific projects, AID could more successfully realize the potential for increasing food availability through food conservation as well as production. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of AID should, in conjunction with the Senegal Government and other donors, as appropriate, assess Senegal's long-term storage requirements at government and farm levels. This assessment should consider: (1) the feasibility of improving Senegal's capability to manage its existing storage facilities, including those financed by AID, and effective management may involve making them available to the private sector; (2) the need for and practicality of additional national-level facilities such as are now in process and being considered, and (3) the practicality of the Food and Agriculture Organization's food security proposal and its modification as appropriate. The Administrator of AID, in conjunction with the Philippine Government, should develop and implement a plan for the efficient use of the food processing center at Central Luzon State University. The Administrator of AID, as an integral part of the agricultural assistance program, should: (1) change the Agency's agricultural assistance policy to recognize food production and food conservation as complementing rather than competing functions and articulate production policy in such a way as not to inhibit consideration of food conservation measures; (2) require the missions to address post-harvest problems in their development strategies or, if more appropriate, in their agricultural sector assessments; and (3) develop guidelines for the overseas missions to design loss-reduction projects and set goals which can be verified. The Administrator of AID should develop a post-harvest research strategy, including priorities and planned activities and an appropriate emphasis on identification and use, or adaptation, of existing technologies. The Administrator of AID, within the university cooperative agreements, should: (1) clearly establish the focus of AID-financed research, (2) provide for an annual research plan for AID approval, (3) establish the amount of research that may be done, (4) require that research activities be clearly identified, and (5) confirm that ongoing research is in harmony with the desired AID policy focus.

118526

[Supplement to Comments on S.2352]. B-207127. May 13, 1982. 3 pp. plus 1 enclosure (3 pp.).

Letter to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. S. 2352 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO supplemented their previous comments on proposed legislation to amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 through the authorization of a State block grant option. Under the proposed bill, States would be given the option of continuing to operate the Food Stamp Program in accordance with the Act or operating a low-income nutritional assistance block grant. GAO believes that the period of notice which States must give when electing the block grant option may not be sufficient to enable all the necessary arrangements to be made. The legislation should be clarified to specify whether a State, after administering the block grant in a particular year, can elect to have the Secretary of Agriculture resume administration of the Program. GAO suggested that States electing the option be required to stay on that program for a specified number of years before returning to the regular Food Stamp Program. Use of a letter-of-credit arrangement and the provision of funds as the need arises would be less costly than requiring the Secretary to pay each block grant State the total allotment of funds for a fiscal year as soon as the amount has been determined. The legislation is not clear as to whether funds allotted to the block grant States may be used to finance administrative costs. Finally, GAO suggested clarification of the proposed bill's audit provisions to: (1) identify the type of audit as a financial and compliance audit, (2) identify the standards that apply in making such audits as the standards established by the Comptroller General for the audit of governmental programs, (3) provide the option of making financial and compliance audits of entities that administer the food assistance block grant, and (4) address the obligations of the Secretary to provide oversight of program expenditures.

118550

[The Proposed Airport and Airway System Development Act of 1982]. June 4, 1982. 7 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation: Aviation Subcommittee; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Federal Aviation Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation: Aviation Subcommittee.

Abstract: Between 1970 and 1980, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) invested about \$760 million to construct and improve runways at over 1700 of the Nation's smaller airports. As a condition for receiving Federal aid, the airport owners, usually local governments, agreed to properly maintain the airports. GAO is conducting an ongoing review of the adequacy of the maintenance of small airport runways which were developed under the program. GAO found that critical runway pavement maintenance has been deferred in most instances for several years at 72 percent of the airports visited. GAO found no significant differences among FAA regions or type of airport. Although poorly maintained runways can be a safety hazard, none of the runways with deferred maintenance were considered unsafe by the inspectors. However, the useful life of the runways inspected could be shortened by an average of 6 years unless they are repaired. In addition, deferring maintenance could result in serious damage to the basic runway structure, thus increasing rehabilitation costs. Much of these increased costs could be borne by the Federal Government if the runways involved are rehabilitated under a future airport devel-

opment aid program. Airport representatives cited a shortage of funds as the most frequent reason for the lack of maintenance. The FAA failure to effectively monitor airport maintenance and to accurately assess airport pavement conditions also contributed to deferred maintenance. FAA inspectors do not report poor maintenance conditions, because finding a sponsor in noncompliance with grant obligations could ultimately lead to taking administrative or judicial actions against the sponsors. FAA prefers to obtain voluntary compliance with grant agreements. GAO believes that FAA may have to use administrative or judicial actions to obtain compliance. FAA is developing, and plans to distribute, an advisory circular on airport pavement maintenance. In addition, FAA plans to train airport sponsors in its use. In structuring a new airport development aid program, Congress may want to require airport sponsors to provide greater assurances that funds for maintenance will be available and provided when needed or to provide financial aid for maintenance at small airports.

118594

Can Our Food Supply Ever Be Completely Risk-Free? 1982. 5 pp. by Carl R. Fenstermaker, Group Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

In *The GAO Review*, Vol 17, Issue 2, Spring 1982, pp 19-23.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration.

Abstract: This article discusses the difficult issues which face scientists and policymakers regarding the safety of the Nation's food supply. Issues discussed included the development of new techniques which will enable scientists to detect potentially harmful substances in food, even when they occur in extremely small amounts, and the potential effects this will have on food and drug law.

118605

[Effects of Cargo Preference Requirement for Dry Bulk Exports and Imports]. PAD-82-29; B-207221 May 7, 1982. Released June 7, 1982. 7 pp.

Report to Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II; by Morton A. Myers, Director, GAO Program Analysis Division.

Issue Area: Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: The Key Elements or Options That Should Be Recognized in the Design of Subsidy Programs and How They Should Be Compared (4058).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: Transportation: Water Transportation (403.0); Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Transportation; Federal Maritime Commission; Department of Commerce.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II.

Authority: H.R. 4627 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO was asked to comment on the effects of requiring that at least 40 percent of the Nation's dry bulk imports and exports be carried in U.S. flag, U.S.-built vessels, particularly with respect to coal. The specific questions addressed were whether such a cargo preference would: (1) inhibit U.S. dry bulk export trade; (2) burden U.S. consumers with increased import costs; (3) increase the costs of U.S. coal and other dry bulk exports so that they would not be competitive on the world market; (4) stimulate investment in domestic maritime trades and shipbuilding; (5) erode the concept of free trade among nations by artificially distorting market prices and by dictating source of transportation; and (6) be practical from a regulatory aspect. **Findings/Conclusions:** The U.S. merchant marine now carries very little of the Nation's oceanborne dry bulk imports. Without

Government subsidies, ship operators have strong incentives not to patronize U.S. shipbuilders and little incentive to register their ships under the U.S. flag. The high cost of shipboard labor accounts for most of the operating cost difference between U.S. and foreign flag vessels. A cargo preference requirement would increase the cost of transporting U.S. bulk exports overseas and would probably exert upward pressure on charter rates, which would result in higher transportation costs for dry bulk exports. In markets where U.S. exporters enjoy a substantial price advantage over foreign competitors, these higher costs can probably be shifted to customers. The larger the share of the market for any commodity that U.S. exports supply, the more likely it is that transportation cost increases can be shifted to customers. The United States is not the world's sole supplier of any export commodity, although it is the dominant supplier of several. Whether the cost of importing dry bulk goods would increase depends upon whether the United States used foreign sources for most of its supplies and the amount of the commodity it consumes. The ability of the United States to expand its share of importing and exporting dry bulk goods is highly limited. Expectations that expanding cargo preference will raise transportation costs enough to decrease exports and imports will reduce investment incentive. The cargo preference provision would impede trade by adding to transportation costs.

identified sites have not been assessed; (4) the clean-up of sites is expected to be a lengthy and flexible process; and (5) the funding obligated for program activities lags behind approved spending. Only the 115 sites on the interim priority list are currently eligible for Superfund-financed remedial action. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) process used to develop this list was inconsistent in applying a scoring system to sites. EPA expects to more than triple the number of candidates considered for the national priority list. It is critical that assessments of sites reported to EPA be conducted, since they represent the first step in determining whether a site is a problem or a potential problem. Until the national inventory is compiled and all identified or reported sites are assessed, the extent of the uncontrolled hazardous waste site problem will remain unknown. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of EPA should direct that EPA and State personnel receive planned additional training and guidance in applying the scoring system to hazardous waste sites before such sites are scored for the national priority list. The Administrator of EPA should request the funding authorized under section 3012 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act to initiate, in conjunction with the States, a national hazardous waste site inventory program. The Administrator of EPA should conduct preliminary assessments at all identified or reported hazardous waste sites lacking such assessments.

118609

[Environmental Protection Agency's Progress In Implementing the Superfund Program]. CED-82-91; B-205704. June 2, 1982. 9 pp. Report to Anne M. Gorsuch, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Federal and State Solid and Hazardous Waste Programs Protecting Public Health and the Environment (2220).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Environmental Pollution Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee.

Authority: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-510). Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-580).

Abstract: GAO was requested to review the Superfund program to identify issues or problems concerning: (1) the selection of candidate sites for Superfund attention; (2) the extent and cost effectiveness of removal, remedy, and other measures at candidate sites; and (3) the ability of State Governments to carry out their Superfund responsibilities. **Findings/Conclusions:** The Superfund legislation provides for a \$1.6 billion fund to be accumulated from taxes and Federal appropriations during fiscal years 1981 to 1985. The fund is to be used by the Federal Government or an authorized State Government to clean up spilled toxic wastes and hazardous waste sites where the responsible party failed to do so. Overall, GAO found that: (1) the program's implementation during its first 15 months was hampered by a lack of final policies and guidance; (2) a limited number of sites are available for remedial action, and problems were encountered in developing the list of sites eligible for clean-up; (3) a national hazardous waste site inventory does not exist, and thousands of

118679

Market Structure and Pricing of U.S. Grain Export System. CED-82-61. June 15, 1982. 37 pp. plus 1 appendix (3 pp.).

Staff Study by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-82-61S, June 15, 1982, Accession Number 118680.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Maintain Strong U.S. Commercial Agricultural Exports (1742).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Commerce; Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Authority: Staggers Rail Act of 1980. Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973. Department of Agriculture Act of 1970.

Abstract: The four major objectives of this study were to: (1) describe and analyze the organization of the U.S. grain export system; (2) define some economic measures for perceived performance problems; (3) conduct an empirical analysis using these measures; and (4) evaluate the implications of the empirical results for the organization of the U.S. grain export system.

Findings/Conclusions: The analysis revealed a healthy rate of entry into the industry, the presence of central market institutions providing for competitive price discovery, and a high degree of pricing efficiency in the U.S. grain export system. The idea that the export industry is controlled by a cartel of major multinational corporations is a misconception. The efficiency of futures markets in aggregating information about export sales into price was analyzed using the efficient market hypothesis, which states that prices in an efficient market reflect all available information. Three levels of efficiency have been proposed for which models of price behavior in the U.S. grain export system were developed. The actual behavior of prices in the futures markets was compared to the hypothesized forms of price behavior using spectral and cross spectral analysis. It was concluded that the hypotheses of weak form, semi-strong form, and strong form efficiency cannot be rejected. These results imply that initial price response to imperfect information is followed by further adjustment upon public release of the correct information about export sales.

118680

An Economic Analysis of the Pricing Efficiency and Market Organization of the U.S. Grain Export System. CED-82-61S. June 15, 1982. 147 pp. plus 4 appendices (62 pp.).

Staff Study by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division

This is a supplement to CED-82-61, June 15, 1982, Accession Number 118679.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Maintain Strong U.S. Commercial Agricultural Exports (1742).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Commerce; Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Authority: Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 96-86). H.R. 4237 (96th Cong.).

Abstract: The four major objectives of this study were to: (1) describe and analyze the organization of the U.S. grain export system; (2) define some economic measures for perceived performance problems; (3) conduct an empirical analysis using these measures; and (4) evaluate the implications of the empirical results for the organization of the U.S. grain export system.

Findings/Conclusions: The analysis revealed a healthy rate of entry into the industry, the presence of central market institutions providing for competitive price discovery, and a high degree of pricing efficiency in the U.S. grain export system. The idea that the export industry is controlled by a cartel of major multinational corporations is a misconception. The efficiency of futures markets in aggregating information about export sales into price was analyzed using the efficient market hypothesis, which states that prices in an efficient market reflect all available information. Three levels of efficiency have been proposed for which models of price behavior in the U.S. grain export system were developed. The actual behavior of prices in the futures markets was compared to the hypothesized forms of price behavior using spectral and cross spectral analysis. It was concluded that the hypotheses of weak form, semi-strong form, and strong form efficiency cannot be rejected. These results imply that initial price response to imperfect information is followed by further adjustment upon public release of the correct information about export sales.

118706

[Federal Efforts To Simplify AFDC, Medicaid, and Food Stamp Program Requirements and Quality Control Procedures]. HRD-82-72; B-207405. May 18, 1982. Released June 17, 1982. 7 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Report to Sen. Lloyd Bentsen; by Gregory J. Ahart, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Coordination of System Management Structures and Processes (1342).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security (600.0); Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Texas: Department of Human Resources; Office of Management and Budget; Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Lloyd Bentsen.

Authority: Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Executive Order 12291.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed some of the problems associated with the different eligibility, implementation, and other requirements of the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC), Food Stamp, and Medicaid programs. Specifically, GAO reviewed the quality control (QC) systems used in the administration of these programs and the possibilities of integrating the QC systems. **Findings/Conclusions:**

The AFDC, Medicaid, and Food Stamp programs are jointly administered and financed by Federal, State and, in some cases, local governments. Federal regulations broadly define AFDC and Medicaid program requirements which allow the States to structure the programs to meet their specific needs. In contrast, Food Stamp program requirements are defined nationally. At the State level these programs are generally administered through a single welfare department which translates Federal and State regulations into program operating rules and procedures. Federal-State QC systems have been established for the AFDC, Food Stamp, and Medicaid programs to identify and measure the level of erroneous payments and to develop corrective actions to reduce them. According to the Texas Department of Human Resources, separate AFDC and Food Stamp programs: (1) require eligibility workers to know and apply different sets of criteria; (2) create the potential for misapplying rules and regulations; (3) cause duplication of effort; and (4) contribute to worker frustration. The Department favors better coordination and consolidation of the programs to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The Office of Management and Budget, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Agriculture have developed an integrated QC worksheet, sampling manual, and procedural handbook for the three programs which some States are using on a test basis. If the tests are successful, all States will be required to use the integrated systems.

118742

[Protest of Solicitation Provisions]. B-206413. June 22, 1982. 2 pp.

Decision re: Worldwide Services, Inc.; by Harry R. Van Cleve, Acting General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Worldwide Services, Inc.; Department of the Air Force.

Authority: 13 C.F.R. 121.3-8(e)(7). B-193453(3) (1979). B-201356 (1981). B-189573 (1979).

Abstract: A firm protested certain provisions in an Air Force solicitation, a total small business set-aside for food services. The Air Force argued that the protester should not have been considered an interested party to the protest since it was a large business. GAO has held that, where a large business protester is ineligible for award under a proper small business set-aside, it will not consider objections to alleged deficiencies in the solicitation since the protester is not an interested party that would be affected by the resolution of the issue. Since the protester did not challenge the propriety of the small business set-aside and since it was a large business according to the small business size standard for food service contracts, GAO concluded that it was not an interested party to the protest. Accordingly, the protest was dismissed.

118782

[Information on Commodity Credit Corporation Loan Repayment Practices]. CED-82-106; B-207895. June 16, 1982. Released June 23, 1982. 6 pp.

Report to Rep. Robert N. Shamansky; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Income (1729).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Robert N. Shamansky
Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.).
Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO gathered information relating to: (1) past and present Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) repayment practices; (2) the statutory and regulatory authority which allows CCC to decide how loan repayments are to be divided between principal and interest, as well as the authority to establish a memorandum account for accrued interest, (3) what a memorandum account is and whether it meets generally accepted accounting principles, (4) how CCC repayment practices differ from commercial banking practices, and (5) other CCC loan programs which allow repayments to be applied first to loan principal. **Findings/Conclusions:** The CCC allows loan repayments for the Tobacco and Peanut Support Programs to be applied first to principal and then to interest. This is contrary to commercial practices, which generally provide for the application of loan collections first to accrued interest due and then to the principal indebtedness. After the principal is liquidated, repayments are then applied to interest receivable. Cash received beyond liquidation of accrued interest is returned to the tobacco associations. However, if the cash collected after the loan principal is liquidated is insufficient to liquidate the total interest due, the account is closed and the receivable waived. There is no statutory authority which specifically states how loan repayments are to be applied. Broad general authority allows the Secretary of Agriculture to administratively determine what portion of loan repayments are to be applied to principal and interest. The Secretary exercises his authority to provide for a tobacco price-support program through a docket passed by the CCC Board of Directors, which he approves. The Secretary also used this authority to establish a memorandum of account for accrued interest on nonrecourse loans; however, the memorandum of account did not meet generally accepted accounting practices and is no longer used.

118785

[States' Capability To Prevent or Detect Multiple Participation in the Food Stamp Program]. CED-82-103; B-206711. June 16, 1982. 8 pp.

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

Abstract: GAO was asked to obtain information on the following: (1) the States' capability to prevent or detect multiple participation in the Food Stamp Program; and (2) how many States do not have a statewide computer system for the Program and what progress these States are making to obtain such a system. In addition, GAO was asked to determine whether the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authority to require States to develop such a statewide computer system for administering the Program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that using computers to match data from different sources is an effective way to detect errors in distributing Food Stamp Program and other income security benefits. The States' capability to routinely perform such checks on an intrastate or interstate basis is largely dependent on their

having sufficient equipment, information, and software. When implemented, several legislative provisions enacted by Congress tend to enhance the States' capabilities for computer matching. This includes the detection of multiple participation as part of an overall effort to provide efficient and effective program administration. The availability of social security numbers is critical to computer matching operations involving both incomes and participation comparisons. In the future, States will be required to obtain and use social security numbers for all participating household members regardless of their age or income status. Subject to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's approval, the proposed funding regulation would provide 75-percent Federal reimbursement for computer system planning, design, development, and installation costs. GAO also found that: (1) 37 States and the District of Columbia have statewide computer systems for administering the Food Stamp Program; (2) 32 of these States can make tests to prevent or detect multiple participation by the head of household, and (3) USDA cannot require States to develop or install a statewide computer system for the Program.

118786

Audit of the House of Representatives Restaurant Revolving Fund for the Fiscal Year Ended October 3, 1981. AFMD-82-59; B-114891. June 23, 1982. 8 pp.

Report to Rep. Augustus F. Hawkins, Chairman, House Committee on House Administration; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting: Operations, Financial Position, and Changes in Financial Position (2802).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Legislative Functions (801.0).

Organization Concerned: House of Representatives: Restaurant.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on House Administration: Services Subcommittee; *House* Committee on House Administration; *Rep.* Ed Jones; *Rep.* Augustus F. Hawkins.

Abstract: GAO examined the House of Representatives Restaurant Revolving Fund's financial statements for the fiscal year ended October 3, 1981. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the Fund's financial statements present fairly its position as of October 3, 1981, and the results of its operations and changes in financial position for the year then ended, in conformity with financial accounting policies applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

118788

International Joint Commission Water Quality Activities Need Greater U.S. Government Support and Involvement. CED-82-97; B-206437. June 23, 1982. 16 pp.

Report to Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Secretary, Department of State; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Refer to CED-82-63, May 21, 1982, Accession Number 118447.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Environmental Protection Regulatory Strategies and Their Balance With Other Priorities (2227); International Affairs: U.S. Participation in International Organizations (0609).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State; Environmental Protection Agency; International Joint Commission--United States and Canada.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies

Subcommittee; *House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.*

Abstract: GAO conducted a review to determine whether the United States is meeting the objectives of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreements with Canada. The International Joint Commission (IJC) is responsible for advising the U.S. and Canadian Governments on Great Lakes and other boundary waters pollution control matters. **Findings/Conclusions:** The U.S. Government has not adequately supported, nor has it been sufficiently involved in, the work of IJC. Consequently, IJC has had difficulty meeting its water quality responsibilities. To help IJC more effectively carry out its advisory role, the United States needs to: (1) formally respond to IJC report recommendations and requests for information on U.S. pollution control activities; (2) provide continuity of U.S.-IJC leadership when active leadership on water quality matters is of high importance; and (3) involve key federal agencies with water quality agreement responsibilities on IJC advisory boards. IJC officials maintain that the lack of formal U.S. responses to its reports and recommendations has hampered its effectiveness in advising the governments. Key U.S. Government and IJC officials believe that formal responses to IJC would result in many benefits, including improved IJC accountability to the U.S. and Canadian Governments. GAO concluded that a formal system of feedback to IJC on its reports would be efficient and useful. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of State should designate a high level official within the Department to respond to any formal IJC recommendations and requests for information and to develop and implement a system to follow up on IJC reports and recommendations. The Secretary of State should develop and formally transmit to the President of the United States a policy and procedures for establishing staggered terms for U.S. IJC Commissioners. The Secretary of State should consult with the Secretary of Agriculture and provide, in an expeditious manner, a U.S. nominee for the Water Quality Board position. The Secretary of State should, in conjunction with the U.S. IJC Commissioners, the U.S. Chairman of the Water Quality Board, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, establish a formal mechanism to acquire input for the Board from all U.S. Federal and State agencies involved in water quality activities. The Secretary of State should develop and send to the President for transmittal to the U.S. IJC Commissioners a formal request for the Commissioners to: (1) develop clear and achievable objectives for the U.S. sections of IJC advisory boards; (2) require the U.S. sections of the boards to prepare activity plans and review such plans regularly to monitor the progress being made by the boards and to ensure that board resources are used effectively, and (3) develop and implement a long-term management plan or strategy for the U.S. Section of IJC which, at a minimum, would provide for periodic meetings with the advisory boards and the regional office.

118809

Audit of the United States Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund FY Ended September 26, 1981. AFMD-82-60; B-114871. June 25, 1982. 6 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.).
Report to Architect of the Capitol; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting: Operations, Financial Position, and Changes in Financial Position (2802)

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Legislative Functions (801.0).

Organization Concerned: Architect of the Capitol.

Authority: 40 U.S.C. 174j-5.

Abstract: GAO examined the U.S. Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund for the period ended September 26, 1981.

Findings/Conclusions: Receipts from sales, commissions, and transfers from the appropriations for the contingent expenses of the Senate are used to finance the activities of the Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund. In accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, GAO examined the balance sheet and related statements of operations and changes in financial position for the years ending September 26, 1981, and September 27, 1980. These financial statements presented fairly the financial position of the Fund as of those dates and the results of its operations and changes in financial position for the years then ended.

118846

Housing and Community Development: National Problems. CED-82-96. June 28, 1982. 68 pp.

Staff Study by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Domestic Housing and Community Development (2100).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development (450.0); Commerce and Housing Credit (370.0); Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0); Veterans Benefits and Services: Veterans Housing (704.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Housing and Urban Development; Department of Agriculture; Department of Commerce; Veterans Administration.

Authority: Housing Act of 1949 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Rural Development Policy Act of 1980.

Abstract: GAO presented its perspective on major housing and community development issues facing the Nation and outlined its plan for addressing these issues during the next year. **Findings/Conclusions:** The study provided an overview of the areas which cover housing, community development, business assistance, and disaster assistance. In addition GAO discussed: (1) the effectiveness of the Nation's efforts to house lower income families; (2) Federal efforts to preserve the physical and financial integrity of assisted housing; (3) the improvement of national strategies for housing; (4) the effectiveness of Federal efforts to provide mortgage credit and stabilize financing to maintain a viable housing industry; (5) strengthening the effectiveness of Federal programs to preserve and upgrade urban and rural communities; (6) enhancing community development through appropriate assistance to small business and farmers; and (7) reducing Federal costs of providing disaster assistance to communities and individuals. The study described how GAO selected the areas reviewed, the objectives of the planned work of GAO, and a listing of ongoing and completed studies in each area.

118847

[Procedures Needed To Ensure That Irrigation Operation and Maintenance Costs Are Recovered at a Jointly Managed Facility]. CED-82-107; B-207944. July 1, 1982. 5 pp.

Report to James G. Watt, Secretary, Department of the Interior; John O. Marsh, Jr., Secretary, Department of the Army; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effectiveness of Cost Allocation, Repayment, and Financing Policies for Federal Water Resource Projects (2517).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of the Army; Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; Bureau of Reclamation.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on the Budget, House Committee on Appropriations' Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works*
Authority: Flood Control Act (43 U.S.C. 390). Reclamation Act (43 U.S.C. 485h(e)).

Abstract: GAO reviewed operations at the Harlan County, Nebraska, Dam and Reservoir to determine whether all reimbursable operating and maintenance costs are being recovered by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. **Findings/Conclusions:** For more than two decades, neither the Corps nor the Bureau has collected all the costs due the Federal Government from irrigators using the dam and reservoir water storage space. These unrecovered costs, which now total about \$962,000, were incurred by the Corps incident to operation and maintenance of the facility. Federal law, Corps and Bureau policies, and the facility's water sales contracts between the Federal Government and the irrigators all require recovery of these costs. Since the Corps operates and maintains the facility and the Bureau administers the water sales contracts with the irrigators, both agencies are responsible for recovering the costs. However, no procedures exist to require the Corps to inform the Bureau to include these costs in its annual charges to irrigators. While such procedures will help provide for the recovery of future operating and maintenance irrigation costs, they will not effect recovery of past costs incurred and unrecovered. The Bureau and the Corps need to determine the extent to which these past costs can be recovered and take appropriate action. Since joint Corps and Bureau management of Federal water projects is fairly common in the 17 Western States, and no procedures exist on how irrigation costs are to be recovered at such facilities, the agencies have no assurance that such costs are being recovered at other jointly managed facilities. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Army should require the Chief, Corps of Engineers, and the Secretary of the Interior should require the Commissioner of Reclamation to establish procedures specifying how future Harlan County Dam and Reservoir irrigation operating and maintenance costs are to be recovered. Corps procedures should require that reimbursable operating and maintenance cost information be provided to the Bureau of Reclamation, and Bureau procedures should require that the cost information provided by the Corps be included in Harlan County facility irrigator charges. The Secretary of the Army should require the Chief, Corps of Engineers, and the Secretary of the Interior should require the Commissioner of Reclamation to seek, to the extent permitted under executed Harlan County Dam and Reservoir water sales contracts, payments from irrigators for past unrecovered irrigation operating and maintenance costs. The Secretary of the Army should require the Chief, Corps of Engineers, and the Secretary of the Interior should require the Commissioner of Reclamation to determine the extent to which situations similar to those at the Harlan County facility exist at other Corps-operated and Bureau of Reclamation-marketed water facilities and adopt procedures to provide for the reimbursement of irrigation operating and maintenance costs at such facilities.

118880

[EPA's Progress in Implementing the Superfund Program]. July 9, 1982. 3 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-82-91, June 2, 1982, Accession Number 118609.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Public Works and Transportation Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee.*

Abstract: The Superfund legislation provides for a \$1.6 billion fund to be accumulated from taxes on petroleum and certain chemicals and Federal appropriations over the fiscal year 1981-85 period. The fund is to be used by the Federal and State Governments to clean up spilled toxic wastes and hazardous waste sites where the responsible party does not take appropriate action. Subsequently, efforts may be made to recover cleanup costs from the responsible party. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implementation of the Superfund Program has been hampered by a lack of final policies and guidance. EPA missed the congressionally mandated due date for publishing a revised national contingency plan and only recently issued final cooperative agreement guidance. Although the legislation required a national priority list of at least 400 sites by June 1981, EPA was only able to provide an interim list of 115 sites by October 1981. The process which EPA used to develop this list demonstrated a lack of nationwide consistency in applying this scoring system to sites, and both EPA and State personnel should be provided additional training and guidance in applying the system. In addition, EPA still lacks a national inventory of the total number of uncontrolled hazardous waste sites existing in the Nation. The administration has not required the funding, and thousands of sites which have been identified or reported to EPA have not been assessed or examined. Until a national inventory is compiled and all identified or reported sites are assessed or examined, the full extent of the Nation's uncontrolled hazardous waste site problem will remain unknown. EPA should request the funding to develop such an inventory and conduct preliminary assessments at all identified or reported, but unassessed, hazardous waste sites. Eighteen months after the Superfund was enacted, there were few Superfund-financed remedial action accomplishments. In fact, Superfund obligations lag far behind the spending levels appropriated by Congress.

118929

[Highway Right-of-Way Program Administration by Wisconsin and Michigan and the Federal Highway Administration]. CED-82-110; B-207439. July 13, 1982. 7 pp.

Report to Andrew L. Lewis, Jr., Secretary, Department of Transportation; by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Transportation Systems and Policies: Effectiveness and Economy of the Administration and Control of Federal Highway Problems (2445).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Transportation: Ground Transportation (401.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Transportation; Wisconsin; Federal Highway Administration; Michigan.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Transportation Subcommittee; House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Transportation Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.*

Authority: Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. 23 U.S.C. 108. 23 U.S.C. 108(c)(3).

Abstract: GAO selected two States with large right-of-way acquisition programs that are active in Federal aid revolving fund, property management, or property disposal programs in order to determine whether: (1) the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is effectively administering the right-of-way acquisition funds; and (2) States are effectively using the land acquired for

rights-of-way in their highway construction programs. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that several weaknesses in the administration of the program exist in the States reviewed. Wisconsin did not promptly return to the Federal Government several million dollars in revolving fund advances used to acquire land for projects that would not be built within the 10-year time limit for construction. In Michigan, construction did not begin within the 10-year time limit on right-of-way projects for which the State received approximately two million dollars in regular Federal-aid funds. In both States, land was erroneously acquired under the requirement to purchase uneconomic remnants. GAO concluded that, in cases where projects are not progressing and will not be built within the 10-year time limit for construction, FHWA should not wait until the expiration of the time limit before requiring the State to either repay the funds or justify retaining them. Although regulations are not specific as to when the time limit expires and extensions may be granted, GAO believes that the State should be required either to formally request an extension or to refund the Federal funds. GAO also found that Michigan and Wisconsin accumulated a large inventory of excess land and that it had been erroneously charged to the Federal Government. FHWA has successfully made efforts to correct the improper charges. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Transportation should direct FHWA to: (1) emphasize to its division offices their authority to initiate such actions; and (2) instruct the divisions to review their revolving fund projects and, where appropriate, to require the States to justify retaining the revolving fund advances or to refund them. The Secretary of Transportation should direct FHWA to emphasize to its division offices how this limit is to be computed and to instruct them to review their converted right-of-way projects to assure that they comply with the limitation. The Secretary of Transportation should direct FHWA to recover such revolving fund advances from Wisconsin as are appropriate.

118952

Preliminary Findings on Patient Characteristics and State Medicaid Expenditures for Nursing Home Care. IPE-82-4; B-208217 July 15, 1982. Released July 16, 1982. 14 pp. plus 1 enclosure (3 pp.).

Report to Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelmsky, Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Development of Relevant, Decision-Oriented Methodological Strategies (2611).

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Budget Function: Health: Nursing Homes (551.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Health Care Financing Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Henry A. Waxman.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-499).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO presented preliminary findings on State nursing home expenditures and the characteristics of patients in nursing homes. Congress is reviewing proposed changes in the inspection and certification procedures for nursing homes. **Findings/Conclusions:** Current inspection and certification procedures are designed to insure that nursing homes with Medicaid and Medicare residents meet certain health and safety standards. The Health Care Financing Administration has proposed revisions to these procedures which would allow biennial rather than annual inspection and which would delete the rule requiring onsite inspection within 90 days of identifying

deficiencies in a nursing home. A GAO analysis of trends in the nursing home industry revealed two important considerations in the issue of whether the proposed revisions should be adopted. Patients entering nursing homes over the past several years have been increasingly dependent or disabled, requiring more extensive and potentially more costly care. At the same time, States are finding it difficult to pay the escalating cost of this care and are taking steps to reduce their nursing home expenditures. The type of care provided to Medicaid patients is likely to change significantly over the next several years. Accordingly, adequate inspection and certification procedures for nursing homes are crucial to insure that facilities meet legislated health and safety requirements. Information on trends in State expenditures for nursing homes and the characteristics of patients is important in assessing the adequacy of proposed changes to procedures.

118997

[Protest of Any Contract Award Under Army IFB]. B-206810.3. July 20, 1982. 2 pp.

Decision re: Tombs and Sons, Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Tombs and Sons, Inc.; K. P. Services Co.

Authority: 56 Comp. Gen. 480. D.A.R. 1-703(b)(1) D.A.R. 2-201(a) D.A.R. 2-405(v). B-204735 (1981). B-207742.2 (1981). B-206834 (1982). 15 U.S.C. 637(b).

Abstract: A firm protested any award to another firm under an Army invitation for bids (IFB) for food services. The IFB was set aside for small business concerns. The protester contended that the lowest bidder eligible for award did not meet the small business size standard listed in the IFB and that its bid price was too low to permit it to perform the contract. The protester also contended that the other firm failed to comply with the procedural requirements of the IFB relating to the identification of concerns with which it was affiliated. GAO held that: (1) it will not consider a protest of a bidder's small business size status, because the Small Business Administration has statutory authority to determine small business size status for Federal procurement; (2) the allegation that a bid price was too low to permit satisfactory performance did not provide a valid basis to challenge an award to a bidder that is determined to be responsible; and (3) a bidder's failure to submit an affidavit in accordance with the solicitation's standard affiliated bidder clause was a minor informality which can be waived or cured after bid opening. Accordingly, the protest was dismissed in part and denied in part.

119000

[Protest Against Any Contract Award Under Air Force RFP]. B-206413.4. July 12, 1982. 1 p.

Decision re: Consolidated Services, Inc.; by Harry R. Van Cleave, Acting General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Consolidated Services, Inc.; Department of the Air Force: Chanute AFB, IL.

Authority: B-199930 (1980).

Abstract: A firm protested the award of any contract for food services under a solicitation issued by the Air Force. The protester contended that the Air Force was attempting to divide up the work from another solicitation in order to circumvent a protest the firm had previously lodged. GAO stated that the Air Force has since canceled the solicitation in question and, therefore, it would not consider the matter. Accordingly, the protest was dismissed.

119008

Cleaning Up the Environment: Progress Achieved but Major Unresolved Issues Remain. CED-82-72; B-207657. July 21, 1982. 2 vols. (vol 1, 51 pp ; vol 2, 57 pp.) plus 4 appendices (7 pp)
Report to Congress, by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Reduction of the Social and Economic Impacts of Environmental Protection Programs on the Public and Private Sectors (2215).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Clean Air Act. Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970. Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977. Clean Water Act of 1977. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976. Water Pollution Control Act. Safe Drinking Water Act. Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. Noise Control Act of 1972. Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (Federal). Solid Waste Disposal Act. Quiet Communities Act of 1978. Aircraft Noise Abatement Act. Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act of 1979.

Abstract: With respect to efforts to clean up the Nation's air, water, and land, GAO conducted a review to determine: (1) the progress made toward meeting key environmental goals; (2) how specific cities have coped with these mandates; and (3) what unresolved issues face the Nation in the future. **Findings/Conclusions:** Overall, there has been progress toward meeting established environmental goals. The air is significantly cleaner, more wastewater now receives the required level of treatment, and most drinking water meets national standards. However, the job is not complete. Deadlines for meeting key goals have been extended significantly and unresolved issues, such as how to control acid precipitation and nonpoint sources of water pollution and how to cope with reduced Federal funding, will make meeting goals more difficult. In addition, the costs and benefits of environmental protection programs are not easily determined. The Environmental Protection Agency has made little progress on its plans for the improvement of solid waste disposal regulation. Acid precipitation and the long-range transport of air pollutants pose serious air quality control problems which have yet to be resolved. In the area of water pollution, little progress has been made toward controlling nonpoint pollution, and ground water contamination is a growing problem. Regardless of whether compliance with environmental requirements occurs slowly or quickly, it is important that initial compliance be sustained over the long term. In addition, there is a need for flexibility in making pollution control decisions. Some of the present pollution control laws increase the volume of residues that must be disposed of and restrict available disposal options. Because of these restrictions, government and industry may not be free to choose the most environmentally safe disposal options dictated by site-specific conditions.

119073

Commodity Futures Regulation: Current Status and Unresolved Problems. CED-82-100; B-203483. July 15, 1982. 215 pp. plus 16 appendices (111 pp.).
Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1751).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Commerce and Housing Credit: Other Advancement of Commerce (376.0).

Organization Concerned: Commodity Futures Trading Commission, National Futures Association.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget, House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Budget, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Congress

Authority: Commodity Exchange Act (Futures). Commodity Futures Trading Commission Act of 1974 (P L 93-463, 88 Stat. 1389). Futures Trading Act of 1978. Independent Offices Appropriation Act, 1952 (31 U.S.C. 483a). Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Administrative Procedure Act. Securities Exchange Act of 1934. OMB Circular A-25. OMB Circular A-123. Commodity Futures Trading Comm. Reg. 1.35(g)(1). Commodity Futures Trading Comm. Reg. 1.50. Commodity Futures Trading Comm. Reg. 1.51. Commodity Futures Trading Comm. Reg. 1.52.

Abstract: GAO conducted a review of the programs of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to assess whether the Commission's programs meet the objectives established by Congress and measure up to the Commission's own stated objectives. This review was conducted to assist Congress in evaluating the Commission's performance in conjunction with its reauthorization. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO stated that the Commission has made progress in developing a regulatory framework to protect commodities customers and that the principal Federal programs for commodities futures regulation must continue if futures trading is to operate reasonably free from abuse. Even if the exchanges assume increasing responsibility for key aspects of regulating futures trading, the Federal Government must continue to monitor exchange performance to determine whether self-regulation is working. The Commission's program to review the exchanges' rule enforcement procedures and performance have not covered all aspects of exchange programs often enough and have not promptly followed up on previously identified deficiencies. The Commission more thoroughly analyzes information submitted to support contract approval than it previously did; however, it still needs to strengthen and clarify its approval requirements and devote more effort to existing contracts to determine if they are actually meeting their economic function. Weaknesses in the Commission's automatic data processing programs prevent it from collecting and analyzing market data in a way that can effectively support its surveillance program. The Commission's efforts to register industry professionals and to identify and remove unfit individuals can also be improved. The reparations program is not meeting its objectives as it takes an average of 3 years to complete the reparations process, complainants have difficulty understanding the program, and the process is expensive. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should reauthorize the existing Federal commodity regulatory programs. Congress should amend section 8a(6) of the Commodities Exchange Act to authorize the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to routinely disclose large-trader information to contract markets for market surveillance purposes with adequate safeguards to protect the information's confidentiality. Congress should: (1) amend section 8a of the Commodities Exchange Act and insert a new subsection to allow applicants/registrants to appeal to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission any registration decision made by a registered futures association; (2) amend sections 4f and 4n of the Act to authorize a registered futures association to register futures commission merchants, commodity trading advisors, commodity pool operators, and floor brokers in lieu of registration with the Commission; and (3) amend section 4p of the Act to allow for the testing of commodity trading advisors and commodity pool operators and to allow any registered futures association to develop and administer such tests for all

categories of Commission registrants upon Commission approval Congress should clarify section 17(b)(4)(E) of the Commodities Exchange Act to ensure that any registered futures association, upon approval by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, can collect the fingerprints of its members and submit those fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for identification and processing. Congress should: (1) raise the dollar limitation on the amount customers can compel exchange members to arbitrate from \$15,000 to \$25,000; (2) authorize the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to periodically adjust this dollar limitation as warranted by inflation and to reflect the size of claims submitted to the reparations program; (3) raise the dollar limitation on the amount that customers will be able to compel National Futures Association members to arbitrate from \$15,000 to \$25,000; and (4) authorize the Commission to periodically adjust this dollar limitation as warranted by inflation and to reflect the size of claims submitted to the reparations program.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should encourage NFA to expeditiously establish proficiency testing and qualification standards for Commission registrants. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should develop a plan for transferring specific audit functions to NFA. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should work with the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants to provide for the timely publication of audit guidelines for use by independent public accountants in performing audits of futures commissions merchants. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should develop a plan for the NFA takeover of registration functions. This plan should be preceded by an analysis of the role NFA can and should play in registration, the Commission's residual role in registration, how the Commission will perform oversight of NFA registration activities, and the information that will be needed to perform this oversight. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should computerize all management information concerning the reparation program. The Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission should report pertinent program statistics to Congress on a regular basis to enable it to make informed judgments concerning the performance and future of the reparations program. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should work with industry officials and NFA to encourage the use of the association as an arbitration forum. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should: (1) adopt the proposed Guideline I revisions; (2) establish procedures for analysis economists to follow in contacting cash market participants including use of the expertise of Commission surveillance economists; and (3) require analysis economists to contact a significant portion of the potential hedgers who submit statements on behalf of an exchange applying for contract approval. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should establish an effective approach for reviewing existing contract markets which include: (1) adopting the proposed rules on dormant and low-volume contracts; (2) identifying contracts that may not be serving an economic purpose and requiring exchanges to demonstrate that these contracts continue to comply with economic requirements; and (3) using surveillance economists to review terms and conditions of existing contracts for conformity to current cash market practices. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should: (1) require exchanges to supply, at the time of their application, all the relevant support they intend to submit to demonstrate economic purpose; (2) establish written staff deadlines for all phases of the review process; and (3) require senior level officials to perform an initial contract review and brief the assigned economist on contract aspects that should be explored. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should charge a fee to collect contract approval process costs. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should: (1) establish and implement a project to improve its large-trader reporting system which includes defining surveillance economists' needs regarding large-trader data and reporting outputs, exploring the use of

machine-readable inputs, and identifying resources needed to maintain the necessary accuracy level; and (2) establish a program to improve the application of automatic data processing in routine analysis of surveillance data, and to develop more sophisticated analytical techniques for surveillance. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should comprehensively address how to assure that exchanges have available adequate large-trader data. This can be accomplished by using the Commission's planned options program to test the ability of exchanges to successfully collect and process large-trader data and by broadening the August 1980 proposed rules on large-trader data collection to assess the issues surrounding the Commission's routine supply of large-trader data to exchanges in return for a fee. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should: (1) implement by the July 1, 1982, target date associated persons sponsorship and the fingerprinting of registration applicants; (2) review the fitness of registrants against Security and Exchange Commission and Federal Bureau of Investigation files on a spot check basis during reregistration; and (3) revise its rules to require the registration of sales and supervisory personnel of commodity trading advisors and commodity pool operators. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should: (1) reduce the number of audits of member future commission merchants (FCM's) and rely instead upon the exchanges to be the primary monitors of these FCM's; (2) devote additional audit resources to monitoring nonmember FCM's and commodity pool operators; (3) provide additional specific guidance on how to conduct exchange audit and financial surveillance programs; (4) perform more frequent reviews of the exchanges' audit and financial surveillance programs and perform more active followup so that exchanges modify their audit and financial surveillance programs to comply with the Commission's recommendations; and (5) conduct reviews of exchange audit and financial surveillance programs in conjunction with rule enforcement reviews. The Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission should direct the agency's Executive Director to: (1) establish a comprehensive information resource management planning process; (2) establish a standard agencywide project management process that will be applicable to each major software development project; (3) emphasize the importance of strong and effective ADP management; and (4) present for Commission consideration and approval a charter establishing the newly organized executive steering committee as a standing Commission committee and setting forth clearly its responsibilities and authority. The Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission should consult with the chief administrative law judge to: (1) assign all reparations complaints to the administrative law judges' dockets as soon as the complainants' filing fees have been received; and (2) establish objective performance standards for administrative law judges that would explain what is expected in terms of performance and productivity. The Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission should direct that the reparations rules be rewritten in plain English and simplified as much as possible. The Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission should collect and analyze the detailed processing information needed to effectively manage the reparations program and assess its performance. The Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission should direct the staff to perform an evaluation of all exchange arbitration programs to determine whether they are meeting all legal requirements. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission should: (1) reallocate its resources to provide greater support to the rule enforcement review program; (2) place greater emphasis on reviews that cover carefully selected aspects of exchange activities, but only after a period of comprehensive reviews has established that exchanges have effectively functioning self-regulatory programs; (3) increase the frequency of selective reviews once the transition from comprehensive reviews has been accomplished; (4) establish substantive followup procedures to ensure that exchanges correct identified rule enforcement deficiencies with reasonable prompt-

ness; (5) supplement the rule enforcement review process with a requirement that exchanges provide necessary evidence to demonstrate that their compliance programs satisfy statutory and Commission requirements; (6) develop more specific standards for exchange self-regulatory programs and more objective criteria to assess exchange self-regulatory performance; and (7) establish a firm link between contract market designation and compliance with exchange rule enforcement responsibilities, designating additional contracts only on those exchanges able to demonstrate satisfactory compliance with self-regulatory responsibilities.

119106

Food Bibliography. CED-82-76. June 1982. 85 pp.
by Henry Eschwege, Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Abstract: This bibliography includes information on documents directly or indirectly related to food, agriculture, and nutrition that have been released by GAO between January and December 1981. The documents included are representative of the broad interrelationship which exists between the food area and other issue areas of concern to GAO such as health, transportation, energy, defense, and international affairs.

119114

[Agricultural Research and Development and Extension Activities]. July 27, 1982. 10 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Science and Technology: Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment Subcommittee; by William E. Gahr, Associate Director, GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-141, July 24, 1981, Accession Number 116007; CED-81-75, April 10, 1981, Accession Number 114908; CED-82-7, December 4, 1981, Accession Number 113909; CED-81-119, August 21, 1981, Accession Number 116172; and CED-82-25, December 28, 1981, Accession Number 117168.

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Science and Education Administration: Extension Service; Office of Science and Technology Policy; Joint Committee on the Future of Cooperative Extension.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Science and Technology: Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment Subcommittee.

Authority: Food and Agriculture Act of 1977.

Abstract: In testimony before a House subcommittee, GAO discussed the results of several major studies performed during the past 2 years relating to Department of Agriculture (USDA) research, development, and extension activities. These included: (1) long-range planning for agricultural research and development; (2) management of plant genetic resources, or germplasm; (3) activities of the Cooperative Extension Service; (4) nutrition research planning and coordination; and (5) personnel needs in the food and agricultural sciences. USDA has made long-range plans for individual internal research topics and has developed operational plans for in-house research, but it does not have a national long-range plan. GAO believes that USDA and State research organizations should cooperate in developing a first step in long-range planning by making a food needs assessment and determining the research alternatives that would assist in meeting those needs. The National Plant Germplasm System is inadequate because of decentralized management of germplasm

resources, which effectively prohibits the implementation of an integrated germplasm development, maintenance, and research program. USDA is taking action to address the System's problems. As a result of a GAO examination of the Cooperative Extension Service's mission, a Joint Committee on the Future of Cooperative Extension was established to develop recommendations on the appropriate mission, scope, priorities, and future direction for the Extension Service. The Government does not have an overall Federal nutrition research plan that identifies specific goals with unified and coordinated strategies. However, several Federal departments and agencies have been working together to facilitate communication and effective and efficient use of resources. The Office of Science and Technology Policy intends to update and expand a 1980 report for use in evolving a broad Federal nutrition research plan. USDA was not obtaining an accurate and up-to-date profile of the overall supply/demand and personnel development requirements for food and agricultural science personnel. As a result of a GAO recommendation, USDA stated that it would obtain input from agricultural industry representatives and that it would interact as well with other Federal agencies in developing future assessments of such personnel needs.

119157

Congressional Decision Needed on Necessity of Federal Wool Program. CED-82-86; B-203829. August 2, 1982. 31 pp. plus 5 appendices (9 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Wool Act (7 U.S.C. 1781 et seq.). Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's wool incentive payment program to determine whether it is accomplishing its objectives and whether these objectives are still valid. **Findings/Conclusions:** The Federal wool incentive program has had little effect on encouraging wool production and improving wool quality because decisions to raise sheep are based primarily on the profitability of the lamb market. Since most producers decide to raise sheep regardless of Federal encouragement, program payments do not necessarily encourage production. Furthermore, the increased use of synthetic fibers in military items, once made entirely of wool, and in commercial products has reduced the need for wool, and it is no longer on the list of strategic commodities. GAO found that, although program payments to producers have been substantial, wool production has declined by over 50 percent since the inception of the program. Furthermore, reports on the domestic wool market indicate that wool quality has not improved. Therefore, the major reasons for establishing a program to encourage wool production are not as important as they were when the program was initiated. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should consider whether Federal financial assistance should: (1) continue to be provided to encourage wool production; and/or (2) be provided to generally assist the sheep industry. Congress should, if the program is retained, eliminate payments to noncommercial producers and payments for unshorn lambs because these payments are not accomplishing their intended objectives.

119171

[Use of Federal Employees as Personal Aides to Federal Officials in Selected Departments and Agencies]. FPCD-82-52; B-207462. July 14, 1982. Released August 10, 1982. 3 pp. plus 3 enclosures (10 pp.).

Report to Rep. Allen E. Ertel, by Clifford I. Gould, Director, GAO Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation: Improvement of the Federal Government System for Staffing (0328).

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Other General Government (806.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of the Interior; Department of Justice; Department of the Treasury; Department of Transportation; Small Business Administration; Consumer Product Safety Commission; National Science Foundation; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Allen E. Ertel.

Authority: 25 Comp. Gen. 844. 54 Comp. Gen. 855. 31 U.S.C. 638a(c)(2). 5 U.S.C. 101.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reported on the number, type, and cost of Federal employees serving exclusively as chefs, chauffeurs, and other types of personal aides for individual Federal officials in selected agencies. **Findings/Conclusions:** Most of the agencies in the survey reported that certain of their officials received individualized transportation services. In those cases where an employee was assigned to drive a specific official, the driver performed other duties when not driving the official. All departments reported that certain top officials received transportation service between residence and place of employment. Government transportation between residence and place of employment is authorized by the U.S. Code for the President and heads of certain executive departments. However, the use of Government vehicles is primarily a matter of administrative discretion, and such use does not violate Federal statutes when it is deemed to be in the interest of the Government. Finally, GAO stated that none of the departments and agencies reported having dining rooms where employees provided food service for one specific official. However, some reported dining rooms that were restricted generally to top officials.

119176

Social Security Benefit Increases for Inflation May Leave Many Retirees Worse Off Financially. HRD-82-40; B-207785. July 2, 1982. 31 pp. plus 3 appendices (11 pp.).

Report to Sen. Daniel K. Inouye; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Comprehensive System Reform (1323).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security (600.0); Income Security: General Retirement and Disability Insurance (601.0); Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Department of Agriculture; Hawaii.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Daniel K. Inouye.

Authority: P.L. 92-336. P.L. 94-566.

Abstract: GAO was asked to examine the net effects of the 1980 and 1981 annual social security benefit increases on the amount of discretionary income of Hawaiian retirees after they had paid for their basic food, shelter, and medical care needs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, in all simulated cases, the amount of real discretionary purchasing power that retirees had after paying for basic necessities had declined. The amount of the decline ranged from approximately 4 percent to 80 percent of discretionary income, with the average amount slightly over 25 percent. In some cases, retirees would have been financially better off if they had not received the benefit increases. Retirees receiving Medicaid benefits under the medically needy option experienced higher discretionary purchasing power loss rates than those not receiving Medicaid, and those receiving housing assistance had lower loss rates than those who were not. Individuals generally experienced greater loss rates than couples. Medicaid program requirements caused the greatest discretionary purchasing power losses. Because the purchasing power of need-based program benefits is not protected to the same degree as that of social security benefits, lower income social security recipients who participate in public assistance programs as well stand to lose benefits from those programs as social security benefits increase. In addressing the issue of offsetting benefit losses, extensive analysis of their effects in different States will be required, primarily because of differences in the operation of the Medicaid program.

119264

[Complaint Concerning Exclusion of Products]. B-203855.3, B-203855.4, B-203855.5, B-203855.6. August 23, 1982. 6 pp.

Decision re: Niedermeyer-Martin Co.; Western Utility Pole Producers; Pacific Rim Trade Association; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Niedermeyer-Martin Co.; Western Utility Pole Producers; Pacific Rim Trade Association; Agency for International Development.

Authority: 59 Comp. Gen. 73. B-205610 (1982).

Abstract: A firm complained about the continued exclusion of one of its products from consideration for use in a foreign country under procurements financed by Agency for International Development (AID) grants and loans. The complainant's position was further supported by two other firms, and the complainant requested reconsideration of an earlier decision which excluded the product from future procurements. GAO based its original decision on information it received from an authoritative source which indicated that the product could not be used by the foreign country. The complainant reintroduced its position, supported by letters from several Government agencies and an authoritative individual which stated that the product was adequate for the foreign country's needs. However, AID reviewed the letters and concluded that their sources appeared to have little understanding of or experience in the job-site requirements. AID reaffirmed its prior decision on the grounds that the letters had no probative value, and GAO held that AID properly complied with applicable grantee regulations when it made its decision. Accordingly, the complaints and request for reconsideration were denied. GAO recommended that AID obtain reviews of the product's suitability from the complainant's supporting sources to resolve remaining questions.

119297

Private Sector Involvement in the Agency for International Development's Programs. ID-82-47; B-206203. August 26, 1982. 79 pp. plus 3 appendices (5 pp.).

Report to Rep. Clement J. Zablocki, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Participation of the U.S. Private Sector in the Development Process (0635).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0)

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of State.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Rep. Clement J. Zablocki.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the extent to which the United States, through the Agency for International Development (AID), promotes and works with both the U.S. and host-country private sectors in developing countries. Specifically, GAO examined those AID programs which are directed toward and implemented through the private sector, those AID funds which are spent to procure U.S. goods and services domestically and abroad, and the procurement of indigenous goods and services in host countries. **Findings/Conclusions:** Since the early 1970's, the AID focus on basic human needs has limited its programs directed toward the U.S. private sector. GAO found that about 50 percent of AID net disbursements in the past 3 fiscal years can be identified as expenditures in the U.S. private sector. Of the remaining amounts, payments to the private sector cannot be isolated, because AID makes payments to various U.S. Government agencies for goods and services, and these agencies in turn spend some of these funds in the private sector. AID disbursements for indigenous goods and services in host countries cannot be quantified on an Agency-wide basis; however, there are figures available on a project basis. Some AID programs are directed toward host-country private sectors and numerous projects are directed toward diversifying agricultural production, generating rural income, and improving health and family planning. Some of these projects are directed toward development of the private sector abroad. Under the present administration, less emphasis will be placed on the transfer of U.S. Government assistance funds and more on the transfer of technology, skills knowledge, and capital of the U.S. private sector.

119340

Cargo Preference Requirements Add to Costs of Title II Food-for-Peace Programs. PAD-82-31; B-171287. August 2, 1982. Released September 1, 1982. 25 pp.

Report to Rep. Millicent H. Fenwick; by Morton A. Myers, Director, GAO Program Analysis Division.

Issue Area: Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: The Key Elements or Options That Should Be Recognized in the Design of Subsidy Programs and How They Should Be Compared (4058); International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630); Transportation Systems and Policies: Determining the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Promotional Programs To Provide for a U.S. Maritime Industry Consistent With National Objectives (2435).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Transportation; Federal Maritime Commission; United States International Development Cooperation Agency.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Millicent H. Fenwick.

Authority: Merchant Marine Act, 1936. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO estimated the costs to the federal government imposed by title II of Public Law 480 on cargo for the Food-for-Peace Program and determined the additional aid that could be delivered in the absence of

the cargo preference requirement. Under the requirement, while the U.S. Government pays for virtually the entire cost of the commodities, U.S.-flag ships must carry at least 50 percent of the commodities to their destination. **Findings/Conclusions:** In fiscal year 1981, the government spent nearly \$250 million to ship title II commodities. GAO calculated that a savings to the government of \$15.6 million dollars would be possible if the requirement were removed. One possible change that might follow its removal would be that more shipping operators would set shipping rates below the current level. Removal of the requirement should not threaten U.S. operators' business which decreases the probability of default on government-guaranteed ship construction loans. GAO estimated that an additional 41.7 thousand metric tons of wheat could be shipped to underdeveloped areas if the requirement were removed.

119341

Assessment of the Use of Tax Credits for Families Who Provide Health Care to Disabled Elderly Relatives. IPE-82-7; B-207310. August 27, 1982. Released September 1, 1982. 17 pp. plus 2 enclosures (4 pp.)

Report to Sen. John Heinz, Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging; by Eleanor Chelmsky, Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Development of Relevant, Decision-Oriented Methodological Strategies (2611).

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Budget Function: Health: Health Care Services (551.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Special Committee on Aging; Sen. John Heinz.

Authority: Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. H.R. 58 (97th Cong.). H.R. 4882 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO evaluated tax relief mechanisms which are used as a way of providing financial assistance to families who care for chronically ill elderly relatives. In considering tax credits as a means of providing financial support to these families, GAO examined: (1) those financial costs that families incur when caring for their elderly disabled relatives; (2) the effectiveness of tax relief programs that currently assist families which provide care; and (3) the issues which should be considered in assessing the merits of legislative proposals for tax credits. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) families are the predominant providers of long-term care for the elderly, but the information that is available is inadequate for a complete assessment of the financial costs of this care; and (2) several States have proposed tax relief legislation and Federal tax provisions exist to offset some expenses, although rigid eligibility requirements result in few families taking advantage of them. GAO stated that several issues that should be taken into account when assessing tax credit legislation are: who would benefit, what it would cost, what oversight problems can be expected, and what the problems are in evaluating the effect of tax credits.

119378

Legislative Developments. 1982. 2 pp.

by Judith Hatter, GAO Office of Information Systems and Services.

In The GAO Review, Vol. 17, Issue 3, Summer 1982, pp. 63-64.

Contact: Office of Information Systems and Services.

Organization Concerned: Peace Corps.

Authority: International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-113; 95 Stat. 1519). Peace Corps Act,

Food Stamp Act of 1977. Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-617). Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978 (P.L. 95-372). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. H. Rept. 97-377. H.R. 5180 (97th Cong.) H.R. 5540 (97th Cong.). S. 10 (97th Cong.). S. 1958 (97th Cong.). S. 1966 (97th Cong.). S. 1967 (97th Cong.)

Abstract: This article discusses legislative developments, including a congressional request for a GAO report on the implementation of the Agriculture and Food Act. It also discusses legislative proposals regarding hospice care, paperwork reduction, and the establishment of a Commission on More Effective Government. A brief analysis is made of the Defense Industrial Base Revitalization Act and of an amendment to the International Security and Developmental Cooperation Act which establishes the Peace Corps as an independent agency.

119413

[Water Sales Contracts From Missouri River Reservoirs Need To Require Reimbursement for Operation and Maintenance Expenses]. CED-82-123; B-208765. September 7, 1982. 6 pp.

Report to: James G. Watt, Secretary, Department of the Interior; John O. Marsh, Jr., Secretary, Department of the Army; by Baltas E. Birkle, (for Henry Eschwege, Director), GAO Community and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Effectiveness of Cost Allocation, Repayment, and Financing Policies for Federal Water Resource Projects (2517).

Contact: Community and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment; Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Bureau of Reclamation; Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers; Department of the Army.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; House Committee on Public Works and Transportation: Water Resources Subcommittee; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Water and Power Resources Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Water and Power Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Water Resources Subcommittee.

Abstract: During an ongoing review of water resources project operation and maintenance (OM) cost recovery systems established by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, GAO identified a problem concerning the nonrecovery of OM costs. **Findings/Conclusions:** Although Bureau water marketing policy requires reimbursement of an appropriate share of municipal and industrial (MI) costs from MI users, the contracts used to sell surplus irrigation water to MI users do not include OM cost recovery provisions. Neither the original Memorandum of Understanding between Interior and the Corps nor any existing or proposed contract with an industrial user addresses OM cost recovery. Neither agency has assumed responsibility for OM cost recovery, and only limited communication has taken place regarding a decision to reallocate a portion of the OM expenses to MI use. The Corps and the Bureau need to assess, recover, and account for an appropriate share of OM costs from current and future MI water users. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should require the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation jointly direct that all future water service contracts specifically provide a contract provision for OM cost recovery. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should require that the Corps of Engineers and the

Bureau of Reclamation jointly direct the necessary communication between the two agencies to establish the proper accounting for OM cost recovery. The Secretaries of the Army and the Interior should require that the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation jointly establish a policy to reallocate an appropriate share of OM costs to existing and future MI water sales.

119460

The Elderly Remain in Need of Mental Health Services. HRD-82-112; B-208507. September 16, 1982. 26 pp.

Staff Study by: Gregory J. Ahart, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Refer to: HRD-81-63, June 15, 1981, Accession Number 115488.

Issue Area: Health Programs: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Provide Health Services to Legislatively Targeted Group (1228).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Health Care Services (551.0); Health: Nursing Homes (551.1); Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2); Health: Education and Training of Health Care Work Force (553.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Authority: Older Americans Act of 1965. Social Security Act. Mental Health Systems Act. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Community Mental Health Centers Extension Act of 1978.

Abstract: GAO discussed the status of mental health services for older clients; the study's findings are based on professional literature and visits to mental health agencies and nursing homes in two States. In addition, barriers to service development and their implications for an aging population were discussed. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the emphasis Congress has placed on serving the elderly in mental health legislation has not been translated into effective service delivery by community mental health centers (CMHC). Although nursing homes do frequently provide health care for elderly patients with mental health problems, the treatment remains focused almost exclusively on physical illnesses. The CMHC program has been the principal Federal response to the mental health needs of noninstitutionalized individuals. Block grant legislation transferred CMHC program administration to the States but continued the requirements for providing specialized mental health services to the elderly. Local mental health providers have been hampered by limited knowledge regarding the mental health needs of older individuals. There has been a lack of coordination between mental health providers and social service agencies. The essential elements of a program for community mental health services for the elderly are: psychogeriatric assessment; outreach to identify and treat those in need; crisis management and emergency services; day treatment and day care; specialized outpatient treatment; case management; institutional care, sheltered living, and social support services; counseling to families of the elderly; and consultation and education. Mental health professionals agree that mental decline is not a normal aspect of aging and that many of the mental problems of the elderly are treatable, arrestable and, in some cases, curable.

119494

Changes Needed in U.S. Assistance To Deter Deforestation in Developing Countries. ID-82-50; B-208514. September 16, 1982. 43 pp. plus 2 appendices (13 pp.).

Report to Congress by: Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Refer to: Testimony, September 16, 1982, Accession Number 119510.

Issue Area: International Affairs Assistance to Developing Countries for More Effectively Managing Natural Resources, Promoting Conservation, and Improving Efficiency of Energy Use (0632); Land Use Planning and Control: Land Use Planning (2352).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs (150.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of State; Department of the Treasury

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Congress.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. P.L. 80-480

Abstract: GAO reviewed the problem of deforestation in developing countries and evaluated whether forestry, agricultural, and rural development projects have been promoting improved and self-sustained forestry and natural resource conservation. **Findings/Conclusions:** The forests of most developing countries are not regenerating themselves quickly enough to sustain an adequate natural resource base for supporting the growing populations. The forestry projects approved by the Agency for International Development (AID) and other donors are experiencing delays, because host-government forest service organizations have been unable to obtain the necessary financial and political commitments from their governments. Economic, political, and social problems limit the ability of developing countries to ease the pressures exerted by their agrarian populations on the mountains, hillsides, and other marginal lands not suited to intense cultivation and grazing. GAO questioned the allocation of much of the AID forestry project assistance for building fledgling forest service organizations which neither have the necessary support of their governments nor the extension service capability to focus immediately on subsistence farmers, the principal cause of deforestation. Coordination and cooperation among international donors at the country level is infrequent and is not encouraged by host governments. Because of the complexities surrounding forest destruction and the financial resources needed to reverse this accelerating trend, the Secretaries of State and the Treasury should request that, in designing their projects, the international organizations give greater consideration to subsistence farmers residing in and around forested and watershed areas. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of the Treasury and State should request international organizations, in designing their projects, to give greater consideration to the impact on subsistence farmer populations residing in and around forested and watershed areas which are targeted for commercial timber harvesting, and road, dam, and irrigation construction projects. The Administrator, AID, should support forestry-related projects that are within host-government political and financial capabilities and work with countries to engender more positive government commitment to deforestation problems. The Administrator, AID, should assess the implementation problems which have delayed some projects and, where problems are attributable to limitations on host-government capabilities, adjust the projects to be better suited to developing country capabilities. The Administrator, AID, should: (1) implement strategies, such as those already endorsed by the agency's forestry policy paper, which encourage program officials to incorporate forestry assistance with agricultural and rural development programs whose principal focus is the subsistence farmers; and (2) seek the cooperation of other donors and the developing countries, where appropriate, to develop the needed links for using established developing-country agricultural service extension systems as a more direct and economic vehicle for improving the forestry and natural resource conservation practices of subsistence farmers. The Secretaries of State and the Treasury should request that the U.S. representatives to the international organizations stress the

importance of improving the productive quality of the land now under cultivation by using more forestry elements in the agriculture programs supported by these institutions

119510

[Changes Needed in U.S. Assistance To Deter Deforestation in Developing Countries]. September 16, 1982. 10 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Science and Technology: Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Human Rights and International Organizations Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Refer to ID-82-50, September 16, 1982, Accession Number 119494.

Contact: International Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Treasury; Department of State, Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Human Rights and International Organizations Subcommittee; House Committee on Science and Technology: Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment Subcommittee.

Abstract: In testimony before congressional committees, GAO summarized the major issues addressed in its report on the changes needed in U.S. assistance to deter deforestation in developing countries. The forests of most developing countries are not being replaced quickly enough to sustain an adequate natural resource base to support the growing populations. The primary cause of this problem is the clearing of forests for more farmland, pastures, fuelwood, and livestock fodder by predominantly agrarian populations. Developing countries are not making the necessary financial and political commitments to deter the environmental problems brought on by the destruction of their forests or sustain the assistance provided by the Agency for International Development (AID) and multilateral development banks and other international organizations. In addition, assistance recipients are finding it difficult to implement and manage forestry projects. Although the developing countries have established forest service organizations, they are insufficiently funded, do not have enough trained staff and, in some cases, involve new or untested technologies. Thus, current project implementation is uncertain. GAO has suggested that AID support forestry-related activities that countries are capable of carrying out, assess the implementation problems which have delayed some projects, and adjust the projects to be better suited to the countries' capabilities. Greater use of established agricultural extension systems in lieu of creating somewhat duplicative forest service extension systems could more immediately introduce improved forest and land-use conservation practices to subsistence farmers. The assistance sponsored by AID and other donors to build the management capabilities of forest service organizations will be needed to bring about long-term forestry programs in developing countries. GAO has recommended that AID and other donors focus increased attention on strategies to slow the subsistence farmers' destruction of forests by working to settle them into more permanent and intensive farming systems. The Department of State, AID, and other agencies must continue their efforts to coordinate activities at both the international and national levels.

119524

[Protest of Air Force Decision Not To Exercise Renewal Option]. B-208932. September 21, 1982. 2 pp.

Decision re: Broken Lance Enterprises, Inc.; by Harry R. Van Cleve, Acting General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Air Force; Broken Lance Enterprises, Inc

Authority: Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)). D.A.R. 7-1903 22 B-202433 (1981) B-206197 (1982) B-206362.2 (1982)

Abstract: A firm protested an Air Force decision not to exercise the renewal option in its contract to provide mess attendant services at an Air Force base. It also protested that the Air Force intends to award a contract for the services without competition to another small business. Where an option is exercisable at the discretion of the Government, the decision to exercise the option or to issue a new solicitation is a matter of contract administration, which GAO does not review. The Air Force also advised GAO that, to meet its needs, it is conducting a competition among firms that qualify for subcontracts under the Small Business Act's section 8(a) program. GAO does not review procuring agency determinations to set aside procurements for small businesses unless there is a showing of fraud or bad faith on the part of Government officials. The protester also suggested that the Air Force decision in this situation constituted de facto debarment without due process. As the protester has not been excluded from contracting with the Air Force or any other Government agency, the loss of the contract to the 8(a) program was not a de facto debarment. Accordingly, the protest was dismissed.

119642

Department of Agriculture Could Do More To Help Farmers Conserve Energy. EMD-82-30; B-207530 September 30, 1982. Released October 7, 1982. 35 pp plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Report to Rep. Richard L. Ottinger, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Energy Conservation and Power Subcommittee, by John D. Heller, Acting Comptroller General

Issue Area: Energy: Further Actions the Government Can Take To Identify and Foster Energy Conservation Opportunities (1619); Food: Effects of Scarcity in Farm Input Resources (1726). **Contact:** Energy and Minerals Division

Budget Function: Energy: Energy Conservation (272.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Energy.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations, Interior Subcommittee, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Energy Conservation and Power Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations, Interior Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Energy Conservation and Supply Subcommittee; Rep. Richard L. Ottinger.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed energy conservation measures which farmers could adopt in the near-term and federal efforts to assist farmers in adopting such measures. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO reported that energy conservation measures that farmers can adopt in the near-term include: (1) more efficient water management, which can conserve both energy and water in the irrigation process, (2) conservation tillage to reduce the number of tractor trips across a field and thereby reduce fuel requirements; and (3) more efficient use of fertilizer, grain drying, and the maintenance and operation of farm machinery and equipment. Some farmers are not implementing energy conservation actions because they are reluctant to change from traditional methods, believing such changes could adversely affect crop yield and income and are too risky. However, certain farming practices that were commonplace only a few years ago are being reevaluated in terms of energy efficiency, cost, and yield potential. To overcome their reluctance to change, farmers need adequate information to assure them that energy conservation actions are also cost effective. Although energy conservation information is available, it is often too general and not applicable to individual farm situations. The

Department of Agriculture's (USDA) field agencies could provide farmers with energy conservation information and the new USDA Office of Energy could be the focal point for energy conservation. Because of the Department of Energy's (DOE) uncertain funding situation, GAO is concerned about the future of its program. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should assign to the newly reestablished USDA Office of Energy responsibility for developing and carrying out an enhanced effort to promote energy conservation by farmers. Using its broad authority, this Office could coordinate and influence energy conservation activities of USDA field agencies to help assure that farmers receive assistance in identifying cost-effective energy conservation measures applicable to their specific farming situations. The Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy should enter into an Interagency Agreement, pursuant to the general USDA/DOE Memorandum of Understanding, for USDA to perform the overall management and monitoring of the ongoing DOE energy integrated farm systems demonstration projects. This should help assure that the government's interests are protected and that the results of these projects are made available to the agricultural community.

119685

Congressional Attention Is Warranted When User Charges or Other Policy Changes Cause Capital Losses. PAD-83-10; B-203865. October 13, 1982. 9 pp. plus 3 appendices (87 pp.).

Report to Rep. Berkley W. Bedell; by Arthur J. Corazzini, (for Morton A. Myers, Director), GAO Program Analysis Division.

Issue Area: Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: Effective Employment of User Charges by the Government (4066).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0); General Government: Central Fiscal Operations (803.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Berkley W. Bedell.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO described how increases in user charges for products and services provided by the Government can cause capital losses. Using an irrigation project as a case study, GAO also showed how the resulting compensation issues can be resolved and provided guidelines which should be useful to Congress and the Federal agencies when they consider changing public policies. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the price of irrigation water should be changed, because current pricing schemes are inefficient, charging for water use by the acre rather than by the unit of water. In addition, the price that water would get in some alternative use, such as the production of electricity, is often higher than the charge paid by irrigators. Those who are most dependent on irrigation to water their crops would suffer greater capital losses than would those who benefit from considerably more rainfall. Capital losses could also vary by the size of farming operations and would differ among farm owners depending upon the form of land ownership. Compensation for capital losses could offset the relatively large losses that some groups would suffer. Compensation could also be justified on equity grounds because of disproportionately high losses on those with little wealth and the disappointment of reasonable expectations. However, compensation may either aid or inhibit desirable productive activity. There are a number of ways in which compensation could be provided for capital losses if such compensation were justified. Revenues from selling water to electricity producers could be used to compensate farmland owners. Farmland owners could be permitted to claim capital losses as deductions from taxable income or as tax credits, or the Government could use debt to compensate the farmland owners. Congress could

delay the irrigation water price increase or give irrigators legal title to the amounts of water which they currently use, which they could sell to electricity producers

119770

[Protest Against Requirement for Performance and Payment Bonds]. B-208316. October 25, 1982. 4 pp.

Decision re: Cantu Services, Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Cantu Services, Inc.; Department of the Army.

Authority: 52 Comp. Gen. 640. 52 Comp. Gen. 644 D.A.R. 10-104 D.A.R. 10-104 2. D.A.R. 10-104 3. B-204303 (1981) B-190889 (1978).

Abstract: A firm protested the requirement for performance and payment bonds in an Army small business set-aside solicitation for dining facility services. The protester argued that the requirement was improper and violated procurement regulations which govern the use of performance and payment bonds in other than construction contracts. The protester also suggested that the contracting officer should waive the bonding requirement. GAO held that contracting officers have discretionary authority to determine whether a need exists for bonding requirements in a particular procurement. In this situation, the contracting officer reasonably justified the bonds as being in the Government's best interest. GAO also noted that the determination whether to waive the requirement is a matter of contract administration and will not be reviewed by GAO. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

119847

Public Rangeland Improvement: A Slow, Costly Process in Need of Alternate Funding. RCED-83-23; B-204997. October 14, 1982. 44 pp. plus 6 appendices (26 pp.)

Report to Congress; by John D. Heller, Acting Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Land Use Planning and Control: Management of Public Lands To Optimize Public Benefits (2313).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of Agriculture; Bureau of Land Management.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Public Lands and National Parks Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Public Lands and Resources Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Taylor Act (Grazing) Land Policy and Management Act. Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978. Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National). Wild and Free Horses and Burros Act of 1971. Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Abstract: GAO conducted a review to determine the status of and progress being made under the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) programs for managing and protecting public rangelands in 16 Western States. *Findings/Conclusions:* Since 1977, BLM has made some progress in meeting a congressional mandate to improve the unsatisfactory conditions of public rangelands in the Western States. BLM has issued over 20,000 grazing permits or leases to individuals and corporations who use Federal rangelands. Permittees with allotments range from large ranchers to some with a few animals. Because BLM has used varying

methods over the years to assess range conditions, the assessments' results cannot be directly compared to show the overall effects of BLM management actions. Nevertheless, the assessments indicate that most of the rangelands are in unsatisfactory condition and produce less than their potential. The current BLM method of determining and classifying range conditions is not directly related to management objectives. In addition, field offices use different methods to gather rangeland trend and forage consumption data. GAO believes that more consistency in data gathering is needed among districts with the same rangeland types and with similar resource conditions and problems. A 1975 court order has delayed development and implementation of range management plans until site-specific environmental impact statements are completed. The decreasing availability of improvement funds caused by budget cuts and declining grazing fees, coupled with the increasing cost of range improvements will further delay BLM progress in improving range conditions and productivity. *Recommendation To Congress:* Congress should assess alternative funding sources such as amending the Public Rangelands Improvement Act to provide an interim increase in grazing fees, provided the funds are used to make range improvements where they are collected. Congress should assess alternative funding sources such as appropriating the special funds already authorized by section 5 of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act for range improvements. Congress should assess alternative funding sources such as amending the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to allow BLM to use a higher percentage or amount of grazing fees for making improvements. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Secretary of the Interior should direct BLM to develop an additional rangeland condition assessment method that will classify conditions in relation to management objectives and require State BLM offices, to the extent possible, to obtain consistent rangeland data to be used for: (1) determining whether management objectives, such as bringing grazing use in line with grazing capacity, are being met; and (2) reporting to Congress and the public on the rangelands' overall condition. The Secretary of the Interior should test and evaluate the feasibility of expanding the Experimental Stewardship Program which allows permittees to receive up to a 50-percent credit of their annual grazing fees for making range improvements. This program, if feasible for expansion, should be implemented with proper fiscal safeguards and in line with the BLM range improvement priority system. The Secretary of the Interior should provide those incentives which the Interior determines to be needed to encourage permittees to make range improvements

119994

[Protest of SBA Selection of Contractor]. B-209806. November 29, 1982. 2 pp.

Decision re: Delta Food Service; by Harry R. Van Cleve, Acting General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Delta Food Service, Small Business Administration.

Authority: Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(a)). 13 C.F.R. 124. B-205060 (1982).

Abstract: A small business firm protested the Small Business Administration's (SBA) selection of another company to furnish food services to the Air Force. The protester complained that the SBA method of choosing contractors is inconsistent and that it should have been selected because of its location. The Small Business Administration has wide discretion in selecting firms for awards under the section 8(a) program of the Small Business Act. Therefore, GAO review of such selections is usually limited to determining whether SBA has complied with pertinent regulations and whether Government officials have committed fraud or acts of bad faith. Since the protester did not allege any such wrongdoings, the protest was dismissed

120029

USDA Needs Objective Criteria for Awarding Special Disaster Payments. RCED-83-54; B-209679. November 2, 1982. Released December 1, 1982. 3 pp plus 2 appendices (19 pp.)

Report to Rep Berkley W. Bedell, by J Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep Berkley W. Bedell.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) decision to award special disaster payments estimated between \$200 million and \$250 million in 83 counties in the Southwest. The review focused on: (1) USDA criteria for designating counties to receive disaster payments, and (2) the equity of the USDA decision concerning counties other than those designated in the Southwest. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that severe crop losses were sustained by many counties designated to receive special disaster payments, but some counties that received disaster aid had less crop damage than other counties, both in the Southwest region and elsewhere in the country, which were not designated for special payments. The review revealed that USDA did not have objective criteria to apply in designating counties to receive special disaster payments, but USDA officials instead used discretionary authority in an inconsistent manner. GAO believes that these payments should be awarded on objective criteria applied uniformly throughout the country. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should establish objective criteria to be used in awarding special disaster payments.

120035

Sharing the Cost of Making Federal Water Project Feasibility Studies. RCED-83-18; B-166506. December 6, 1982. 23 pp. plus 4 appendices (12 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to Report dated January 12, 1983, Accession Number 121109.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Economy and Efficiency in the Development and Rehabilitation of Water Projects (2514).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of Agriculture; Department of the Army.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; Congress.

Authority: Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National) (42 U.S.C. 4332). Flood Control Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 1962d-5b). Irrigation and Reclamation Act P.L. 83-566. S 1809 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO discussed feasibility studies undertaken by the Federal government to resolve water resources problems and the factors affecting the study outcome. The purpose of the review was to determine how frequently studies did not identify acceptable solutions and why. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO estimated that, during the past 17 years, Federal agencies have spent about \$100 million on water project feasibility studies. In its review GAO examined more than 1,200 studies and found that most of the concluded or completed studies were unable to identify acceptable solutions to water resources problems. In many cases, costs to correct a water problem either exceeded the benefits or local government or communities did not support the solution. GAO believes that cost sharing between the Federal entities and local sponsors would provide evidence of local commitment to a study and any resulting project and thus reduce the likelihood of a solution that is unacceptable to the community. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should assure that cost sharing is applied uniformly by all Federal water resources agencies and include all direct and indirect costs related to performing the study. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of the Departments of the Army, Agriculture, and the Interior should direct the Chiefs of the Corps of Engineers and the Soil Conservation Service and the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation to: (1) meet with the local sponsor to gain an understanding of the type, size, and cost of the project they envision; (2) evaluate the sponsor's legal authority and financial capability to contract for and fund a project; and (3) determine whether study sponsors have adequately assessed the depth and likely commitment of support.

120074

The Elderly Should Benefit From Expanded Home Health Care but Increasing These Services Will Not Insure Cost Reductions. IPE-83-1; B-208492. December 7, 1982. 46 pp. plus 5 appendices (15 pp.).

Report to Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Development of Relevant, Decision-Oriented Methodological Strategies (2611); Health Programs: Effectiveness of Health Care Regulations, Reimbursement Policies, and Utilization Control Program (1223).

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Budget Function: Health: Health Care Services (551.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Sen. Orrin G. Hatch.

Authority: Social Security Act. Older Americans Act of 1965.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed evaluations of projects offering a wide range of community-based health care services to determine the cost and effectiveness of expanded home health care service. **Findings/Conclusions:** In examining nursing home use, GAO found that service availability did not conclusively reduce the use of nursing homes among the elderly and that more work is needed to better define and identify individuals for whom nursing home use can be reasonably decreased. Recent studies indicate that the effect of expanded home health care on hospital use is still unclear. GAO has found evidence that individuals who receive expanded home health care

services live longer than others who use the currently available health services, and they report feeling more satisfied with their lives. However, the actual effect of home health care services on clients is not clear because of methodological problems in evaluations. GAO found that, while individual nursing home or hospital costs may have been reduced, total health care costs have increased. This is partly because a new population is being served that had not used similar health care services before and because of the costs of the expanded services, including administrative and monitoring costs. GAO found inconclusiveness and many conflicts in the findings of existing evaluations of home health care services which arose from methodological problems in research. However, new research efforts may avoid many of these problems because of their design. It appears that expanded home health care is not likely to reduce overall health care costs. However, other options may be available.

120088

Federal Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition Programs in the New England Region. RCED-83-36; B-209580. December 2, 1982. 2 pp. plus 5 appendices (41 pp.).

Report to Rep. James M. Jeffords; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Best Management and Planning Tools Applicable to the Food and Agriculture System and Their Uses (1736).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Congressional Relevance: Rep. James M. Jeffords.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO conducted a study to identify program efforts and funding levels of Federal food, agriculture, and nutrition programs in New England, analyzed program changes from fiscal years 1981 to 1982, and analyzed the impact of changes on the New England food system.

Findings/Conclusions: The Federal food, agriculture, and nutrition programs available to New England during fiscal years 1971 through 1980 emphasized food assistance to consumers. Programs directed at producers were second in the amount of assistance provided. Data analysis indicates that the fiscal year 1982 budget for agricultural agencies increased overall, even though funds budgeted for food assistance decreased. The final appropriation package for fiscal year 1983 has not been enacted, but current appropriation efforts indicate that funds for seven food assistance and dairy programs pertinent to New England would be reduced.

120132

[Information Regarding U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Management of Recreation Areas]. RCED-83-63; B-210098. December 15, 1982. 9 pp.

Report to Rep. Bud Shuster; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Water and Water Related Programs: Efficiency, Effectiveness, Economy, and Safe Operation and Maintenance of Water Resources Projects (2515).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers; National Park Service.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Bud Shuster.

Authority: Water Project Recreation Act (P.L. 89-72). Flood Control Act of 1954 (16 U.S.C. 460d). Flood Control Act of 1962 (P.L. 87-874). P.L. 79-633. S. Doc. No. 97 (87th Cong.). 16 U.S.C. 17j-2(b).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided: (1) a description of the National Park Service's and the Corps of Engineers' general responsibilities for managing recreation areas; (2) a comparison of the fiscal year 1983 operations and maintenance budget cuts the Corps made in its recreation activities to those it made in other operations and maintenance activities; (3) information on the Corps' decision to close three recreation areas at the Raystown Lake Project; and (4) information on the Corps' procedures for awarding recreation-related contracts at Raystown Lake. **Findings/Conclusions:** While the Park Service manages recreation areas of national significance to preserve them for use by future generations, the Corps manages recreation areas more local or regional in nature that have been developed around water projects it operates for flood control, navigation, or water supply purposes. Both the Park Service and the Corps have reduced the amount of recreation services at their facilities as a way of reducing their fiscal year 1983 operations and maintenance costs. While the Corps' total operations and maintenance budget increased about 14 percent in fiscal year 1983, the recreation portion decreased about 7.6 percent. The only other functions that were reduced were navigation operations, studies related to operations, and natural resources maintenance. At Raystown Lake, the Corps reduced its operations and maintenance budget about \$36,000 by reducing services at 3 of its 17 recreation areas. A review of contracting procedures for recreation services provided during fiscal year 1982 at Raystown Lake showed that in all cases the Corps used competitive bidding practices and in all cases but one the lowest bidders were awarded the contracts. In that one case, the lowest bidder was disqualified due to the appearance of impropriety. Competitive bidding procedures were also used for concession contracts and a forestry, fish, and wildlife management study.

120223

The National Park Service Has Improved Facilities at 12 Park Service Areas. RCED-83-65; B-209917. December 17, 1982. 16 pp. **Report to Sen. Malcolm Wallop,** Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Public Lands and Reserved Water Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Land Use Planning and Control: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Meet the Outdoor Recreation Needs of Americans (2315)

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Recreational Resources (303.0); Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: National Park Service; Department of the Interior.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Public Lands and Reserved Water Subcommittee; Sen. Malcolm Wallop.

Authority: Safe Drinking Water Act (P.L. 93-523). Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (Federal) (P.L. 92-500). Solid Waste Disposal Act (P.L. 94-580). Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-599).

Abstract: GAO was asked to report on actions taken by the National Park Service to correct deficient National Park facilities which were identified in a 1980 report. **Findings/Conclusions:** Following a GAO report which identified 172 facilities at 12 Park Service areas which failed to meet health and safety standards, Congress, the Park Service, and park concessioners have placed a high priority on correcting the deficiencies. Nearly all of the deficient facilities have been improved or are scheduled for improvement by the end of fiscal year (FY) 1987. During FY 1981,

Congress appropriated \$16.5 million to correct critical health and safety deficiencies in the National Park System. In FY 1982, the Park Service began a special program to rehabilitate or replace unsafe park facilities, spending \$23 million to meet health and safety needs. The Park Service has also negotiated contracts with park concessioners which require them to correct unsafe conditions. In some cases, concessioners have made improvements that were not required by their contracts. The Park Service has corrected, or plans to correct: (1) 85 hazardous lodges and dormitories; (2) 53 drinking water systems that did not meet State and Federal standards; (3) 7 sewer systems which were poorly designed; and (4) 27 bridges and tunnels which are in need of repair. The Park Service also plans to monitor closely the condition of bridges and tunnels and has restricted or will restrict their use when warranted.

120242

International Assistance to Refugees in Africa Can Be Improved. ID-83-2; B-209851. December 29, 1982. 43 pp. plus 3 appendices (12 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Effective Management of Refugee Assistance and Disaster Relief (0633)

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State; Agency for International Development; United Nations: Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on the Judiciary; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Congress.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962. Refugee Act of 1980. P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: GAO reported on improvements that could be made in international assistance to refugees in Africa. **Findings/Conclusions:** Based on visits to four countries, GAO stated that efforts to meet refugee needs could be improved by better planning and coordination. GAO found that inequitable amounts and types of assistance have been provided to refugees in Africa, the U.N. programs tend to be open-ended and without plans for phasing out assistance, and continuous high levels of assistance often serve as a deterrent to refugees' voluntary repatriation. At two camps, the amount of assistance provided to refugees has exceeded the living standards of the local population. GAO believes that these problems occurred because comprehensive country-program plans and agreements with governments offering asylum and program guidance were not established nor was donor assistance effectively coordinated. African refugee programs are not sufficiently evaluated because of the Department of State's limited in-country assessment of, and reporting on, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) activities and projects, and the fact that about 95 percent of U.S. contributions to the program were unrestricted and inherently difficult to track. GAO found that, in some countries, governments consider the refugees as guests and limit the extent to which refugees can effectively resettle and integrate into the economy. Less restrictive asylum-country policies are needed for Agency for International Development (AID) refugee assistance to be effective. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of State should encourage UNHCR, in planning and implementing African refugee assistance programs, to: (1) develop a more comprehensive working agreement with asylum governments, defining the

specific roles, responsibilities, and authority of the UNHCR and the asylum governments, and (2) develop a multiyear plan of operations for those countries where near-term solutions to refugee problems do not appear possible. The Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Administrator of AID should, where appropriate, establish a means to better evaluate and report on specific UNHCR refugee programs. State Department oversight of UNHCR programs should determine whether such programs: (1) provide assistance to all refugees who require assistance; (2) provide reasonable amounts and types of assistance in keeping with UNHCR standards and objectives, (3) are effectively coordinated with other donors and private voluntary organizations; and (4) promote lasting solutions to refugee problems. The Administrator, AID, should closely monitor AID plans for bilateral refugee assistance to assure that asylum countries remove barriers to economic integration of refugees before making direct U.S. commitments.

120265

Customs Has Corrected a Deficiency in Administering the Quota on Imported Tuna. GGD-83-34; B-209675. December 27, 1982. Released January 3, 1983. 6 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.).

Report to Rep. John B. Breaux, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Edwin B. Forsythe, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; by William J. Anderson, Director, GAO General Government Division.

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Administration of Justice: Federal Law Enforcement Activities (751.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce; Department of the Treasury; United States Customs Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Edwin B. Forsythe; Rep. John B. Breaux.

Authority: Tariff Act of 1930. Proclamation No. 3128.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO evaluated the U.S. Customs Service's method and manner of counting imported tuna canned in water, including the process used to determine when the quota is reached and the method used for setting the quota. **Findings/Conclusions:** The tariff-rate quota for certain imported canned tuna was established by a Presidential proclamation and incorporated into the tariff schedules. Under these schedules, canned tuna qualifies for a 6-percent duty rate if the product is preserved in any manner other than oil, if the packages are not over 15 pounds each, and if the aggregate quantity of such tuna imported does not exceed 20 percent of U.S. production during the preceding calendar year. If the quota amount based on the U.S. production of tuna is exceeded, a duty rate of 12.5 percent is charged. GAO found no indications that the methods used by Customs personnel to obtain import data on products having quotas were ineffective. However, Customs did not charge imports of tuna from American Samoa against the quota for 7 years. When this error was detected in 1978, such imports were charged against the quota. Had Customs charged the tuna imported from American Samoa against the quota from 1970 through 1978, the amount of tuna imported would have exceeded the quota limits in only 2 of the 9 years which were affected. However, in 1980, imported tuna was assessed at the higher duty rate of 12.5 percent. Since 1980, as a result of increasing imports from American Samoa as well as from other countries, tuna imports have exceeded the quota resulting in a higher duty rate.

120268

[GAO's Major Activities in Aging During Fiscal Year 1982]. HRD-83-25; B-197357. December 17, 1982. 1 p. plus 3 enclosures (10 pp.)

Report to Sen. John Heinz, Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging; by Edward A. Densmore, (for Philip A. Bernstein, Director), GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Impact of Income Security/Social Services Programs on Target Populations (1344).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Special Committee on Aging; Sen. John Heinz.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO submitted a statement on its internal activities which involve the elderly, a list of reports issued from September 30, 1981, through September 30, 1982, and a list of assignments which relate to programs and services for the elderly.

120315

Need To Improve Fishery Management Plan Process. RCED-83-72; B-207301. January 7, 1983. 11 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). Report to Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary, Department of Commerce; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Trends in Fish Productivity and Opportunities for Improvements (1739).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: National Marine Fisheries Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Authority: Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National). Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the fishery management planning process authorized under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which extended U.S. fisheries' jurisdiction and established eight regional fishery management councils which develop plans that provide the basis for and describe the conservation, management, and regulatory measures which govern and control specific fisheries. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) approves and implements these plans. **Findings/Conclusions:** The regional management councils and NMFS have made considerable progress in developing and implementing fishery management plans. However, Congress has expressed concern about the fishery management plan review and approval process. The process now takes an inordinate amount of time and the councils and NMFS differ over whether specific fisheries need to be managed and the responsibility for developing specific conservation and management measures. Further, council members believe that the Department of Commerce has frequently exceeded its legislative authority in reviewing fishery management plans. GAO

stated that Commerce's policies regarding National Environmental Policy Act compliance exceed what is needed to satisfy the act, represent an unwarranted Federal regulatory burden, and delay the fishery management plan approval process. Commerce is working on organizational and administrative changes to make the plan review and approval process more efficient and to improve the working relationships between the regional councils and NMFS. Among the changes under consideration are transferring authority and responsibility from headquarters to field offices and developing framework management plans to help expedite the process. However, opinions continue to differ about the councils' and Commerce's roles in fishery plan development. In addition, Commerce needs to reduce, to the extent possible, unnecessary regulatory requirements that are impeding fishery plan development and implementation. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to provide additional information to the councils on the benefits of using the framework management plan concept. Special attention should be directed to alleviating the councils' express concerns in the development and use of framework plans, including designating authority to change approved management measures. The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Administrator of NOAA to allow councils wide latitude in determining how fisheries should be managed and limit reviews to matters that affect the national standards and other applicable Federal laws. The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Administrator of NOAA to permit regional councils to prepare environmental assessments in developing fishery plans and prepare environmental impact statements (EIS) only when warranted. Criteria should be developed to assist councils in determining when an EIS is needed. The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Administrator of NOAA to develop, in consultation with the regional councils, a generic EIS that could be applied to several fishery plans in the same geographic area.

120351

[Query Regarding Availability of Natural Disaster Emergency Loans]. B-197765. January 10, 1983. 7 pp.

Letter to Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton.

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1013a; 7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.). Agricultural Credit Act of 1978. Disaster Relief Act. 7 C.F.R. 1945.20. P.L. 97-35. P.L. 95-334. *Dubrow v. Small Business Administration*, 345 F. Supp. 4 (D. Cal. 1972). 1978 U.S. Code Cong. & Ad. News 1185. 124 Cong. Rec. S12139. 124 Cong. Rec. S21998. 124 Cong. Rec. H21752. 1982 Emergency Operations Handbook for USDA State and County Emergency Boards. 7 U.S.C. 1961 et seq. 92 Stat. 426.

Abstract: GAO was asked whether the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) has been unlawfully limiting the availability of natural disaster emergency loans authorized under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. GAO stated that the FmHA practice of basing loan eligibility on countywide, rather than individual, crop losses violates the act. GAO was also asked to review the loan program's authorizing legislation as to the legality of the FmHA practice. GAO believes that FmHA is conducting the program in a manner which is inconsistent with congressional intent and in violation of the act.

120388

[Comments on a Critique of GAO's Radioactive Waste Ocean Dumping Report]. RCED-83-45; B-204946. December 17, 1982. Released January 19, 1983. 3 pp plus 2 enclosures (13 pp)
Report to Rep. Norman E. D'Amours, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Oceanography Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division
Refer to EMD-82-9, October 21, 1981, Accession Number 116900.

Issue Area: Energy: Actions To Reduce Risks of Nuclear Fuel Cycle (1623); Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Environmental Protection Regulatory Strategies and Their Balance With Other Priorities (2227).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Energy: Energy Information, Policy, and Regulation (276.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Energy; Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Oceanography Subcommittee, Rep. Norman E. D'Amours.

Abstract: GAO was asked to review a critique which disagreed with the overall conclusions of a GAO report on the hazards of past low-level radioactive waste ocean dumping. The report concluded that those concerns have been overemphasized and that monitoring past dumpsites is of limited value in developing future ocean-dumping regulations. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO believes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of its earlier report are valid, its presentation of scientific studies and opinion is accurate, and the methodology used is sound. The critique did not address much of the evidence which GAO used to derive its conclusions. It did not mention agency estimates that only small volumes of radioactive wastes have been dumped, nor did the critique recognize that: (1) most of the radioactivity has decayed; and (2) there is an absence of baseline data on radioactivity already present at dumpsites when dumping began and a lack of information on specific types, quantities, and locations of radioactive materials that were dumped. Given limited Federal funds, GAO believes that any scientific opportunity that might be gained from monitoring past dumpsites could be better obtained by monitoring future dumpsites. Despite critique assertions to the contrary, the GAO report neither advocated nor opposed a resumption of ocean dumping of radioactive waste. It did agree with a critique's major conclusion that test sites, uncontaminated by past ocean dumping, should be monitored to establish baseline data necessary to effectively monitor the effects of future ocean dumping of radioactive waste.

120390

Federal Agricultural Research Facilities Are Underused. RCED-83-20; B-209390. January 14, 1983. 34 pp. plus 4 appendices (9 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to Testimony, June 22, 1983, Accession Number 121734.

Issue Area: Food: Efficient Stimulation of Agricultural Research and Development (1735).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. S. Rept. 97-248.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the underuse of Federal agricultural research facilities operated by the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and its effect on ongoing research. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, despite the underuse of existing laboratories, new laboratories are under construction and others are being planned. These additional facilities could further reduce the overall rate of use because the ARS personnel ceiling is not expected to rise in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, staffing for new laboratories may be at the expense of existing ones. To fully use its existing research facilities, ARS would require a substantial increase in its annual appropriations and higher personnel ceilings. ARS has closed some facilities and transferred staff to other locations to improve facility use. In response to the administration's directive to all civil departments to identify low priority activities for elimination, ARS has developed plans, still under internal discussion, to close up to 12 research facilities. Long-term planning and good justification for closures are necessary before research laboratories can be closed. New facility construction or major expansion of existing space should be tied to long-range research goals and objectives. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should not consider authorizing or providing funds for additional research facilities until ARS has completed its planning process and Congress has had an opportunity to study those plans given the currently underused research facilities, the unlikely prospects for personnel ceiling increases for ARS, and the congressional mandate to conduct a long-range needs assessment and determine the research necessary to meet those needs. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should develop a plan to consolidate agricultural research activities at fewer locations, thereby allowing greater scientist interaction and more efficient use of equipment, facilities, and administrative resources. The plan also needs to address research priorities, personal and career plans of ARS employees, the costs of relocating employees, and the potential sales values of unneeded laboratories. The Secretary of Agriculture should submit the plan to the appropriate committees of Congress for their review and comments.

120445

Changes Underway To Correct Inadequacies in Florida's Meat and Poultry Inspection Program. RCED-83-70; B-210209. December 30, 1982. Released January 31, 1983. 26 pp. plus 3 appendices (7 pp.).

Report to Sen. Lawton Chiles; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Food Quality Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741); Consumer and Worker Protection: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0951).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food Safety and Inspection Service; Florida.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen. Lawton Chiles.*

Authority: Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act. Wholesome Poultry Products Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.). FSIS Meat and Poultry Inspection Directive 910.1.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed Florida's meat and poultry inspection program, focusing attention on deficiencies found by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and on Florida's actions with respect to these and other deficiencies found by its own compliance personnel. **Findings/Conclusions:** The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service inspects interstate meat and poultry plants to ensure the safety and accurate labeling of products. It also monitors State inspection programs which must be at least equal to those of the Federal Government. GAO noted that the service's ratings of the Florida program for the past 3 years were consistently lower than other State programs and showed no significant improvement trend. Deficiencies involved violations of Federal acts pertaining to interstate export, improper use of USDA and State inspection marks, and misbranding and mislabeling of products. GAO learned that, in 1982, Florida established an organization to monitor compliance with its inspection laws and regulations, and it formalized the State's procedures for following up on deficiencies found by USDA. A small number of violations were classified by this unit as serious and involved processing without State inspection or selling uninspected meat. Although these efforts by the State were too recent to be reflected in current USDA ratings, GAO believes that the changes in meat and poultry inspection in Florida indicate that the State has taken positive steps to upgrade its program.

120452

Agricultural Economics Research and Analysis Needs Mission Clarification. RCED-83-89; B-201434 January 31, 1983 26 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to Testimony, June 22, 1983, Accession Number 121734.

Issue Area: Food: Efficient Stimulation of Agricultural Research and Development (1735); Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: Current Macroeconomic Events, Problems, and Policies of Interest to the Congress (4031).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.*

Authority: Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act (National). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113). Organic Act of 1862 (7 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO examined and clarified the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) economics research and analysis activities. GAO made its review in terms of the USDA Economic Research Service's (ERS) overall mission and program priorities and its relationship to that of state land-grant institutions. GAO also reviewed USDA activities with regard to planning, priority setting, and coordination of public sector agricultural economics research and analysis. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that there is a disagreement within the agricultural community on the roles of ERS and the land-grant institutions' departments of

agricultural economics. Contributing to this problem is the lack of clear roles between ERS and land-grant institutions in their economics research. A systematic determination of research needs is important because some research needs must be given higher priorities than others. However, very little has been done to plan for, set priorities for, or coordinate overall public sector agricultural economics research and analysis activities. Decisions are often made on an ad-hoc basis with little coordination between USDA and the land-grant institutions. GAO concluded that, during the past few years, ERS has conducted socioeconomic research which GAO believes is questionable from a subject matter perspective, while other priority research and analysis needs have not been given adequate attention. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture, in cooperation with the state land-grant institutions, should (1) examine and clarify the federal role in agriculture economics research and analysis, including the ERS role in relation to that of the land-grant institutions; and (2) prepare a statement of the ERS mission and role in relation to the state land-grant institutions and submit it to the appropriate congressional committees for their information and review. The Secretary of Agriculture should provide leadership in planning and coordinating agricultural economics research and analysis by directing the Administrator, ERS, to actively encourage joint program planning for, and coordination of, agricultural economics research and analysis with the land-grant institutions as well as other interested federal and state agencies.

120456

Does AFDC Workfare Work: Information Is Not Yet Available From HHS's Demonstration Projects. IPE-83-3; B-208885 January 24, 1983. 15 pp. plus 4 enclosures (12 pp.).

Report to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; by Eleanor Chelmsky, Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Assuring the Performance of Effectiveness Evaluations To Create Information Needed by Congress (2616); Income Security and Social Services: Inclusion of Work Requirements in Cash Assistance Programs (1335).

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Budget Function: Income Security. Other Income Security (609.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Training and Employment (504.0), Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Social Security Administration: Office of Family Assistance. **Congressional Relevance:** *Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Sen. Edward M. Kennedy.*

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Social Security Act. Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO answered some questions about Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) efforts to evaluate the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) demonstrations which are intended to test innovative approaches for requiring recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children to earn their welfare benefits in jobs in the public or private nonprofit sector. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that there is no legislative requirement that HHS evaluate or report to Congress on CWEP demonstrations. However, committee reports on the legislation do imply the necessity of evaluations to determine which programs have demonstrated success. GAO found that HHS has used different approaches in providing for the evaluation of fiscal year (FY) 1982 demonstrations. A multi-State evaluation project was initially proposed but it was not funded. In its absence, the States were not required to undertake, nor were they given funds to expand, their own evaluation efforts. Some of the demonstrations approved for FY 1983 are

required to have an evaluation component and funds have been awarded for that purpose. Oversight of the demonstrations has been accomplished through quarterly progress reports from the States and monitoring by Federal project officers. GAO stated that strengthening oversight procedures could make it more likely that the evaluations of these demonstrations will be successfully implemented. To date, the HHS evaluation program has not provided information on whether workfare was successful in moving recipients to unsubsidized jobs, reducing welfare costs, or meeting other program goals. As a result, future policy discussion on workfare will not be adequately informed. To provide information on the success of workfare, the proposed 1983 evaluations must be implemented and the methodological integrity of their designs must be maintained.

120509

The Challenge of Enhancing Micronesian Self-Sufficiency. ID-83-1; B-209903. January 25, 1983. 61 pp. plus 1 appendix (17 pp.).

Report to Rep. John F. Seiberling, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; Public Lands and National Parks Subcommittee; Sen. James A. McClure, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Matching of U.S. Development Assistance to the Greatest Needs and Coordination With Development Efforts of Others in Country and Regional Programs (0631).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Other General Government (806.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Department of Defense; Department of State; Office of Management and Budget; Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; Republic of Palau; Republic of the Marshall Islands; Federated States of Micronesia. **Congressional Relevance:** House Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Public Lands and National Parks Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; Rep. John F. Seiberling; Sen. James A. McClure.

Authority: P.L. 81-815. P.L. 96-63. Dep't of the Interior Secretarial Order 3039. 20 U.S.C. 1241. 42 U.S.C. 254b. 92 Stat. 2397.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the institutional capability of the Micronesian governments to plan and administer public-sector programs and services. GAO also reviewed the conditions and the operations and maintenance of the extensive public works programs. **Findings/Conclusions:** Under its Micronesia trusteeship, the United States has encouraged the formation of constitutional governments, supported the growth of educational programs, expanded the access of people to modern medical care, and invested extensively in physical facilities as a requisite to economic development. Despite these efforts, the Micronesian governments continue to face serious obstacles to becoming more self-sufficient. Geographic, social, and public policy constraints have and continue to limit the growth of the private-sector economy. GAO found that government budgets exceed the capabilities of the economies to support them and remain dependent on U.S. funds. Although much progress has been made under a 5-year capital improvement program, it has been estimated that \$100 million would be required to fund full-scope restoration. The operations and maintenance of Micronesia's capital improvements and support equipment lacks funds, technically capable professionals, qualified skills personnel, planning, and work control programs. As a

result, most Micronesian facilities and equipment are deteriorating. Resources will continue to be limited, and Micronesia is experiencing public administration problems in financial and personnel management and human resource development. Enhancing these institutional capabilities will continue to require substantial technical assistance from multiple sources. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Interior, through the Office of Territorial and International Affairs, and in cooperation with the Governments of the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, should, during the period before the trusteeship ends, develop an action plan to guide the provision of all U.S. and other technical assistance to the Micronesian governments. The Secretary of the Interior, through the Office of Territorial and International Affairs, and in cooperation with the Governments of the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands should, during the period before the trusteeship ends, conduct a series of assessments of the technical assistance requirements of the Micronesian governments. The Secretary of the Interior, through the Office of Territorial and International Affairs, and in cooperation with the Governments of the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, should, during the period before the trusteeship ends, identify what technical assistance is available and can be provided to the Micronesian government by Interior, other federal agencies, international organizations, the private sector, and colleges and universities.

120515

[Funding for Corps of Engineers Projects]. B-205053. April 29, 1982. Released February 7, 1983. 8 pp. plus 1 attachment (6 pp.).

Letter to Rep. Carl D. Perkins; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army: Corps of Engineers.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Carl D. Perkins.

Authority: Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (31 U.S.C. 1400(4)). Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act, 1981 (P.L. 96-367; 94 Stat. 1331). Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act, 1982 (P.L. 97-88; 95 Stat. 1135). Flood Control Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-298; 79 Stat. 1073). Water Project Recreation Act. 55 Comp. Gen. 307. H. Rept. 89-464. H. Rept. 89-973. H. Rept. 96-1366. H. Rept. 97-345. B-200769 (1980). 31 U.S.C. 1403. 31 U.S.C. 1404. 79 Stat. 1081. 79 Stat. 1082.

Abstract: GAO was asked to investigate whether funds appropriated for two Corps of Engineer projects in fiscal years 1981 and 1982 were being withheld in contravention of the Impoundment Control Act. In 1981, the Corps spent less on one project than was available after a budget deferral. The entire amount appropriated for general construction in fiscal year 1982, together with unobligated carry-over balances, has been apportioned. However, funds were not obligated for new construction contracts at the project, except for cemetery relocation, because the Corps perceived problems with the project design. The project will be terminated unless an acceptable alternate plan is developed. By reporting, withholding, and then releasing deferred funds by the end of the fiscal year, the President followed the procedures set out in the Impoundment Control Act. The Flood Control Act directed the Corps to proceed with an acceptable plan for the project. Therefore, the current reduction in funds did not contravene that mandate, and the fiscal year 1982 funding was not objectionable under the Impoundment Control Act. As long as the entire amount appropriated is allocated among authorized projects, there is no impoundment for purposes of the

Impoundment Control Act The Corps also expended less on the second project than was allotted. The full amount was not expended because the engineering and design work did not progress to the point where the entire amount could be used in fiscal year 1981. The fact that funds remain unobligated does not by itself constitute an impoundment. An impoundment need not be reported under the act when funds remain unobligated due to program-related factors and are not the result of fiscal policy or other nonprogrammatic considerations. With regard to fiscal year 1982 funds, the Corps plans to proceed with developing an alternate plan for the project, based on its judgment that the original plan is no longer desirable. Since the second project was funded from a lump sum appropriation, the Corps was not obligated to spend a specified amount.

120516

[The Food Stamp Act: Section 18(a)(2)]. B-206198 May 14, 1982. Released February 7, 1983. 5 pp. plus 1 attachment (5 pp.). Letter to Rep. E. (Kika) de la Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Office of Management and Budget.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E. (Kika) de la Garza; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2027(a)(2)). Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980 Agriculture and Food Stamp Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98) Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 2996f(a)(5)). H. Rept. 96-788. S. 1309 (96th Cong.). B-199777 (1982). B-201928 (1981). 7 U.S.C. 2026

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the interpretation and implementation of section 18(a)(2) of the Food Stamp Act and made a suggestion as to how the statute could be improved by amendment. The section prohibits the use of Federal funds to interfere with or impede the implementation of the provisions of the act, including the provisions authorizing workfare projects. Congress intended to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the support of certain kinds of obstructive activities. Some federally supported activities were permitted even though they could, at times, hinder the implementation and smooth operation of the workfare program. These activities included: data collection, information analysis, advising and representing clients whose interests might be adverse to the workfare program, and assisting clients in the exercise of their First Amendment rights as the concern the program. Prohibited activities included: counseling clients to commit or threaten acts of violence against the program, and intimidating officials to try and terminate a workfare project. GAO has found that the lobbying activities of a legal services corporation were not in violation of the Food Stamp Act, while they were in violation of the antilobbying provisions of the Legal Services Act. GAO has found other activities to be somewhat disruptive but involving merely aggressive advocacy by recipients on the part of their respective clientele. The section has not been made the subject of implementing regulations. GAO believes that compliance could be better assured if implementing regulations specified the limits on permitted activities. If the noninterference provision is amended, GAO recommended that activities which Congress decides to prohibit be explicitly listed in the statute.

120517

[Query Regarding Proposal To Allow Overtime Compensation]. B-195921(VBG). October 20, 1982. Released February 7, 1983. 2 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Letter to Sen. Steven D. Symms; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food Safety and Inspection Service; Office of Personnel Management

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Steven D. Symms.

Authority: Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-250; 88 Stat. 55). 54 Comp. Gen. 921. 60 Comp. Gen. 611. 29 U.S.C. 204(f). 31 U.S.C. 71. 31 U.S.C. 74.

Abstract: GAO was asked whether decisions handed down by the Office of Personnel Management and GAO necessitated a Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) proposal to allow overtime compensation to poultry and meat slaughter inspectors for clothes-changing and cleanup activities. FSIS is required to act in accordance with GAO decisions over whether inspectors are entitled to overtime compensation. In a 1981 decision, GAO stated that since meat inspectors become extensively soiled and contaminated conducting their duties and, given the rigorous sanitation procedures imposed on them by their agency, the clothes-changing and cleanup activities are not merely for the convenience of the inspectors. Therefore these activities are compensable under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as overtime. Whether clothes-changing or cleanup activities are hours of work under the Act depends not on the position classification standards but on the conditions of employment. Therefore, inspectors who change clothes or clean up under different circumstances and for their own convenience might not have these activities compensated under the FLSA. Since FSIS has promulgated a rule requiring overtime payments for clothes-changing and cleanup activities citing the GAO decision, GAO presumed that it found that all those affected by the rule are situated similarly to those inspectors who were subject to the GAO decisions.

120537

Need for Greater Efforts To Recover Costs of Food Stamps Obtained Through Errors or Fraud. RCED-83-40; B-205033. February 4, 1983. 61 pp. plus 1 appendix (20 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to Testimony, April 25, 1984, Accession Number 123992.

Issue Area: Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744); Income Security and Social Services: Collection and Recovery Efforts (1354).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Social Security Act. Food Stamp Act of 1964. Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1979. Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Debt Collection Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-365). H.R. 6394 (97th Cong.). H. Rept. 97-759. S. Rept. 97-128. S. Rept. 97-504.

Abstract: GAO conducted a review of the Food Stamp Program to see if improvements have been made in the identification and recovery of overissuances and the adjudication of cases involving alleged fraud since a 1977 report. *Findings/Conclusions:* During fiscal years 1980 and 1981, the federal government lost about \$2 billion through state overissuances of food stamp benefits, and eligible households received about \$500 million less than they should have. The erroneous issuances resulted from administrative and recipient errors and fraud. Only about 1 cent of each overissued dollar was recovered. Using semiannual quality control results, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) can project the total amount of overissued and underissued benefits, but it has no reliable data on how many of these errors states identify with specific households. Data from six states indicated that, compared with total estimated overissuances, relatively few specific cases have been identified. GAO stated that the use of computer matching to identify and ultimately recover specific overissuances holds considerable promise, and legislation implemented in recent years provides needed financial incentives to identify more overissuance cases. Although states are required to establish claims against households identified as receiving overissuances, they have not always done so because collection was difficult; however, recent legislation provides financial incentives and requires offsets against benefits to households still in the program of recipient-caused errors. GAO found that states have not investigated or adjudicated many identified cases of potential fraud because of the problems they perceived in pursuing them and FNS has not acted in a concerted way to solve or lessen barriers to state fraud pursuit. *Recommendation To Congress:* Congress should amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, to require recovery of overissuances by reducing monthly benefits of recipient households regardless of the reason for the improper issuance. Congress should add a new section 13(b)(3) to require states to promptly take all necessary steps to recover any overissuances from households no longer participating in the program. The congressional legislative and appropriations committees should direct the Secretary of Agriculture to evaluate and inform them of the results of any legislative changes and administrative efforts to improve the identification and collection of overissuances and the potential impact of any additional initiatives being considered in this area. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Secretary of Agriculture should issue regulations specifically requiring states to identify and correct erroneous issuance cases, either: (1) as a by-product of routine program procedures required for other purposes, such as recertifications; or (2) through computer matching and other specific identification techniques that can detect multiple program participation and discrepancies in household-reported eligibility/benefit data. These regulations should require that each state, as a minimum, identify erroneous issuances caused by classes of eligibility criteria that quality control results or other available information shows as causing substantial dollar errors in that state. Adequate implementation of this aspect of state operations should be specifically considered by FNS in determining whether administrative sanctions are warranted. The Secretary of Agriculture should explore with the states ways in which error-prone profiles could be used, in conjunction with computer matching and other identification techniques, to pinpoint household circumstances which have high error potential so that states' administrative resources can be directed toward corrective actions that will result in maximum benefits. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to solicit, compile, and distribute to the states information on the availability of different kinds of data files that could and should be used to verify household data items that have a major bearing on program eligibility and benefit levels. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to revise the present claims report received from the states monthly to include information on the number and value of erroneous issuance cases identified through each of the various identification methods that are available. This

information should be assessed and distributed to inform the states of the effectiveness of the different identification methods being used. The Secretary of Agriculture should evaluate each state's performance in establishing and collecting claims. Such evaluations should reveal individual state's, as well as program-wide, strengths and weaknesses in the claims establishment and collection process and provide a basis for a FNS determination of whether administrative sanctions are warranted. As a minimum, these evaluations should include: (1) a review of the information in states' Status of Claims Against Households reports to ensure that all claims and collection activity are reported accurately; (2) systematic reviews of Office of Inspector General reports, state management evaluations, and other analytical reports and statistical information on the states' success in claims and collection activity; and (3) onsite reviews of the effectiveness of each state's collection techniques, especially the required offset procedure. The Secretary of Agriculture should provide technical assistance, based on evaluation and monitoring efforts and other available information, to improve state claims establishment and collection activity as may be needed. Such assistance should include but not be limited to: (1) advice and help to states in developing appropriate accounting systems and controls needed to use the offset procedures most effectively, particularly in cases involving amounts owed from prior periods of households' participation; (2) identification and dissemination of available information on alternative and innovative collection techniques that states use in other programs, and that some states may use in this program, which could be used, or used more, to enhance collection of food stamp overissuances not subject to offset authority; and (3) assistance in implementing alternative collection strategies that hold promise for good results. The Secretary of Agriculture should determine the extent of recipient fraud within the Food Stamp Program and establish the appropriate level of state pursuit and adjudicative efforts needed to control recipient fraud. The Secretary of Agriculture should require that states' program operating plans include adequate: (1) methods and criteria for identifying cases in which a question of fraud may exist; (2) procedures, developed in cooperation with states' legal authorities, for referring to law enforcement officials cases in which a valid reason to suspect fraud exists; and (3) procedures for referring to an administrative fraud hearing process all cases not referred to or accepted for court prosecution for reasons other than insufficient evidence. The Secretary of Agriculture should require states to periodically report pertinent information on their fraud pursuit activities. These reports should include information on all phases of fraud pursuit and adjudication, including the numbers and dollar amounts of all referrals to and from various levels of the investigative and adjudicative processes and the ultimate dispositions of the cases. Such data should identify backlogs in any of the investigative steps or adjudication procedures used. The Secretary of Agriculture should periodically evaluate states' investigation and adjudication efforts to determine whether states collectively and individually are adequately pursuing potential food stamp fraud. The Secretary of Agriculture should assess the problems that state officials have reported or may report as barriers to adjudicating alleged food stamp fraud and, to the extent practical, provide the guidance and technical assistance necessary for resolving or decreasing the adverse effect of those problems.

120543

[*Research and Extension Programs to Aid Small Farms*]. RCED-83-83; B-199623. February 9, 1983. 2 pp. plus 1 enclosure (13 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to RED-76-2, August 15, 1975, Accession Number 096852.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee, House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) actions to implement the recommendations made in a 1975 GAO report to ensure that small-farm research and extension programs are practical, beneficial, and cost-effective. **Findings/Conclusions:** The current GAO examination showed that research and extension services have been increased and that data collection activities have been expanded since the 1975 GAO report. However, to date USDA has neither: (1) developed data on the overall costs and benefits of small-farm extension activities; nor (2) adequately encouraged State extension services to establish procedures to identify small farmers most in need of assistance and to establish action plans to improve the participants' farming skills. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Federal Extension Service to work, cooperatively with the State extension services, to develop guidelines for carrying out special small-farm extension programs in a way that will provide technical assistance to the maximum number of small farmers and a means to collect data on and estimate the costs and benefits of small-farm extension program activities.

120689

Greater Emphasis on Early Employment and Better Monitoring Needed in Indochinese Refugee Resettlement Program. HRD-83-15; B-179183. March 1, 1983. 48 pp. plus 23 appendices (74 pp.).

Report to Rep. Romano L. Mazzoli, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary: Immigration, Refugees and International Law Subcommittee; by Philip A. Bernstein, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Refugee Programs in Resettling, Assimilating, and Achieving Self-Sufficiency for Target Populations (1340).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Labor; Department of State; Department of State: Bureau of Refugee Programs.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on the Judiciary: Immigration, Refugees and International Law Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Immigration and Refugee Policy Subcommittee; Rep. Romano L. Mazzoli.

Authority: Refugee Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-212; 94 Stat. 102). Refugee Assistance Amendments of 1982 (P.L. 97-363).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed Federal and State refugee assistance programs authorized under the Refugee Act of 1980, concentrating on the initial resettlement services provided by voluntary agencies under Department of State auspices and social services funded by the Department of

Health and Human Services (HHS). **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that many interrelated problems have prevented Indochinese refugees from achieving the act's goal of self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. Foremost among these problems has been the continued placement of most refugees in a few locations in the United States and the lack of employment assistance given to newly arrived refugees. Other problems which have seriously affected the goals of the act include: (1) limited monitoring by volunteer agencies to ensure that refugees receive services needed to help them become self-sufficient; and (2) fragmented Federal management of the resettlement program and poor program direction and oversight. GAO noted that welfare dependency for Indochinese refugees has been high and has occurred almost immediately upon arrival; these high rates are apt to continue unless refugees are resettled in areas conducive to their attaining quick self-sufficiency and more emphasis is placed on early employment. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of State should comply with the requirement of the Refugee Act of 1980 which requires the voluntary agencies to submit proposals as a requisite to being funded for providing initial reception and placement services to refugees. The Secretary of State should require the Bureau of Refugee Programs to undertake program and financial monitoring on an ongoing basis and to assure that periodic audits of voluntary agencies' activities are performed. The Secretary of HHS should monitor and assess the services provided through the Office of Refugee Resettlement social service funding to assure greater emphasis on job development and placement services to newly arriving refugees and that emphasis is given to employment concurrent with training to the extent possible. The Secretary of State should specify in the funding agreement that voluntary agencies will place high priority on job development and placement assistance for refugees and on monitoring refugees' progress toward self-sufficiency. The Secretary of State should revise funding agreements with voluntary agencies to clarify the activities that the agencies and their affiliates are expected to provide under those agreements versus activities using their own resources, those of local sponsors, or other Federal resources.

120700

[Foreign Assistance Programs]. February 28, 1983. 18 pp. Testimony before the Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; by Samuel W. Bowlin, Associate Director for Development Assistance, GAO International Division.

Contact: International Division.

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee.

Authority: Arms Export Control Act.

Abstract: In testimony before a congressional subcommittee, GAO reviewed its recently completed and ongoing work on U.S. foreign assistance programs. In a report to the Agency for International Development (AID), GAO reported that AID does not have adequate information on the number and value of host country contracts, and GAO has begun a survey of AID contracting activities. GAO also reported on AID efforts to categorize troubled projects and identify those project funds that should be deobligated. GAO will soon issue a report on donor approaches to development assistance and is reviewing commodity import programs. Other GAO studies include reports on AID management of its Private Voluntary Organization program and balance-of-payments problems which are having an adverse effect on development assistance projects; the need for efforts to deter deforestation in developing countries; the need for AID to give greater attention to the problem of postharvest food losses; and the level of commitment to fighting malaria. In addition, GAO

will review direct U.S. assistance to refugee programs and the coordination of U.S. contributions to various international organizations. GAO pointed out that large foreign military sales programs are being provided to countries which may not be able to repay the loans, and it is preparing a report on the liberal financing which Israel has requested to pay for its defense needs. In addition, GAO stated its concern over the inappropriateness of military equipment which has been provided to developing countries. Finally, GAO reported that the financial management and monitoring of leased property is still inadequate and that congressional notification requirements are not being fully met.

120704

Lessons Learned From AID's Private Sector Development Efforts in Egypt. ID-83-18; B-210693 February 28, 1983 43 pp. plus 3 appendices (16 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division

Issue Area: International Affairs: Better Management of Programs Designed To Increase Private Sector Involvement in Development (0640).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of State; Arab Republic of Egypt.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. International Security Assistance Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO reported on the progress which the Agency for International Development (AID) has made in assisting the Government of Egypt to develop its private sector. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the development of a private-sector development strategy has been slow and difficult, with AID and Egyptian Government limitations impeding progress. The Egyptian business climate does not favor the private sector, and Egypt has not clearly defined the role which the private sector should play in its economic development. GAO found that AID had not long been involved directly with industrial private-sector development when it began to design a program for Egypt. The AID mission did not actively involve the Egyptian Government in developing its strategy, and it has viewed the program to date as a learning period and plans to refine its strategy and develop projects to better respond to Egypt's needs in the future. Because of implementation problems, GAO stated that it is doubtful some projects will achieve their objectives. Financial assistance provided has thus far benefited a relatively small group, primarily larger, financially well-established firms located in the Cairo/Alexandria metropolitan areas. Financial assistance has not been targeted toward small-scale enterprises which comprise the majority of Egyptian private enterprises. GAO believes that AID could apply some of the lessons learned in Egypt to other countries. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of AID should direct the mission to actively involve the Egyptian Government in developing, refining, and revising its private-sector development strategy to ensure that it is consistent with Egyptian Government priorities and goals. The Administrator of AID should direct the mission to assess future information needs and, in conjunction with Egyptian officials, develop a plan to address these needs. The Administrator of AID should explore the mechanisms to mitigate the negative effects of AID procurement regulations on private-sector credit projects. The Administrator of AID should direct the mission to consider folding the Private Investment Encouragement Fund into the proposed Production

Credit II project if it is approved; if not, the Administrator should consider terminating the Private Investment Encouragement Fund project and seeking an alternative means for delivering term-credit assistance. The Administrator of AID should direct the mission to closely monitor the Private Sector Feasibility Studies project and terminate it if the project becomes inactive again.

120709

U.S. Development Efforts and Balance-of-Payments Problems in Developing Countries. ID-83-13; B-206712 February 14, 1983. 31 pp. plus 5 appendices (34 pp.)

Report to George P. Shultz, Secretary, Department of State; Donald T. Regan, Secretary, Department of the Treasury; M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Participation of the U.S. Private Sector in the Development Process (0635).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State; Agency for International Development; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-424). P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: GAO reviewed U.S. programs designed to assist countries with balance-of-payments problems focusing on: (1) what the United States can contribute to easing the pressures of developing countries' debt burdens while ensuring the most effective and efficient use of limited resources, and (2) what relationship debt rescheduling has to a U.S. bilateral program in the rescheduling country. **Findings/Conclusions:** The Agency for International Development (AID) administers U.S. balance-of-payments support programs in some developing countries in addition to carrying out the U.S. bilateral development assistance program. AID is faced with the need to balance its development mandate to provide basic human needs with the increased incidence of balance-of-payments difficulties. GAO believes that AID program planners and missions may lack guidance as to which countries and at what point the United States will consider assistance in deteriorating balance-of-payments situations. Since the 1950's, the United States has rescheduled debts of developing countries when they faced imminent default. The United States considers debt rescheduling to be a financial matter with the objective of providing maximum loan repayments to the United States. The United States ties a debt rescheduling agreement to an International Monetary Fund stabilization agreement and seeks maximum debt repayment consistent with the debtor country's economic recovery. Thus, the goals of debt rescheduling are, to some extent, compatible with the goals of development assistance. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of AID should direct AID missions to develop an action plan for AID to consider, when they determine that a country's balance-of-payments situation is deteriorating to the point of affecting the AID ongoing development assistance effort, taking into account all factors which restrict the agency's role. The plan could include an assessment of whether the AID ongoing projects continue to be appropriate, how they relate to other donor activities, whether the country is following appropriate economic policies, and an estimate of the country's resource needs.

120713

Improvements Needed in the District's General Public Assistance Program. GGD-83-13; B-205015 March 3, 1983 31 pp plus 1 appendix (6 pp.)

Report to Marion S. Barry, Jr., Mayor, District of Columbia; by William J. Anderson, Director, GAO General Government Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1351).

Contact: General Government Division

Budget Function: General Purpose Fiscal Assistance: Other General Purpose Fiscal Assistance (852.0).

Organization Concerned: District of Columbia; District of Columbia Department of Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations; District of Columbia Subcommittee; House Committee on District of Columbia; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations; District of Columbia Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Governmental Efficiency and the District of Columbia Subcommittee.

Authority: District of Columbia Public Assistance Act of 1962 (P.L. 87-807). District of Columbia Dep't of Human Resources Policy Handbook.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the District of Columbia's General Public Assistance (GPA) program and recommended specific action which it believes will enhance the District's administration of the program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that some recipients worked and earned income in excess of allowable earnings or received unemployment compensation while they received GPA benefits. Increased use of the reports which list recipients who may have earned wages or received unemployment compensation will ensure that correct payments are made to eligible recipients. Also, recipients need to be adequately informed of the program's eligibility requirements and the consequence of failure to report changes in their medical conditions or social status. Many recipients should not have been certified to receive GPA either because they were ineligible or because sufficient information was not available to make a determination of eligibility. Guidelines have not been developed to assist the District's Medical Review Team (MRT) in making determinations for GPA eligibility. In addition, since recipients referred for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are not regularly certified, many continue to receive GPA benefits without a current medical evaluation. A GAO analysis of a sample of judgmentally selected cases showed that data concerning other recipients' periods of eligibility are not being accurately entered into the computer data base. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to establish procedures to require that all Match Recipient Reports (MRR's) be reviewed. Such reviews can be accomplished by distributing MRR's to caseworkers for preliminary review before complete investigation by the Office of Eligibility Review. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to prepare monthly MRR's for GPA recipients who received unemployment compensation benefits. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to develop guidelines for use by MRT for determining medical eligibility for GPA benefits. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to devise a new form, or revise existing forms, to strengthen the procedures concerning the requirement that recipients report changes in their medical condition or social status and the consequences of not reporting such changes. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to review all cases referred for SSI every 3 months and those cases determined not eligible for SSI should be reviewed for recertification for continued GPA benefits. Periodic reports should be made to management on the number of cases pending and the status of case reviews. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to ensure that all information concerning recipients' eligibility expiration

dates in the computer data base is accurate and that all cases with past-due expiration dates are reviewed. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to emphasize to caseworkers the need to forward all medical reports to the MRT when they are received. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to seek authority to discontinue assistance in those cases where the recipient offers inadequate justification for refusing to act on referrals for training or treatment. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to implement procedures requiring followup and exchange of data on recipients referred for training/treatment. The Mayor should instruct the DHS Director to implement a quality control system for the GPA program. The Mayor should instruct the Department of Human Services (DHS) DHS Director to prepare and issue a procedure manual for the day-to-day operations of the GPA program.

120737

Interim Report on the Implementation of the Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980. GGD-83-26; B-204456. March 7, 1983, 55 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Federal Oversight of Financial Institutions: Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Farm Credit System in Providing Agricultural Credit Services (3911)

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Government; Other General Government (806.0).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress. **Authority:** Farm Loan Act (P.L. 64-158; 39 Stat. 360). Agricultural Credit Act (P.L. 67-503; 42 Stat. 1454). Farm Credit Act of 1933 (P.L. 73-75; 48 Stat. 257). Farm Credit Act of 1953 (P.L. 83-202; 67 Stat. 390). Farm Credit Act of 1971 (P.L. 92-181; 12 U.S.C. 2260; 85 Stat. 583). Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-592; 94 Stat. 3437). P.L. 94-184. P.L. 95-443. 89 Stat. 1060. 92 Stat. 1066

Abstract: GAO undertook a review of 13 programs pursuant to the provisions of the Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980 which require GAO to conduct evaluations of the programs and activities authorized by the amendments and to make an interim report to Congress. **Findings/Conclusions:** The 1980 amendments authorized the Farm Credit System's district Banks for Cooperatives to offer financial services related to exporting and importing agricultural commodities. GAO found that the Farm Credit Administration (FCA) and the Banks for Cooperatives encountered a number of problems in implementing the international banking services program. GAO found that FCA does not have the capability to independently evaluate country risk associated with the extensions of credit by the Central Bank for Cooperatives under the international banking services program. FCA needs this capability to adequately examine the Central Bank and to ensure its financial soundness and integrity. The 1980 amendments also sought to enhance the opportunity for commercial banks and other agricultural lenders to obtain funds by discounting agricultural loans with the Federal Intermediate Credit Banks. GAO found that certain aspects of these regulations lack specificity in defining eligibility for access to the discounting services. The 1980 amendments require that each association in the Farm Credit System prepare a program for furnishing credit and services to young, beginning, and small farmers and ranchers. GAO found that FCA has not given district banks specific guidance on various types of qualifying programs. Because a reporting system has not been developed for this program, program results may be difficult to measure. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Governor, FCA, should establish minimum requirements which district

Banks for Cooperatives must meet before they are allowed to undertake an international banking services program. The Governor, FCA, should determine the feasibility of using the results of the Federal bank regulatory agencies' country risk studies or have FCA develop such studies on its own. The Governor, FCA, as part of his responsibilities to supervise and examine the Farm Credit System, should closely monitor the implementation of the Other Financing Institution Program in each Farm Credit district to ensure that Other Financing Institutions, which are significantly involved in agricultural lending and are otherwise eligible, are given the opportunity to enhance their utilization of the financial services of the Federal Intermediate Credit Banks and better serve the needs of agriculture. The monitoring should specifically include application of the regulations and policies dealing with agricultural loan volume, debt-to-capital ratio, access to national and regional money markets, investment in the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank, and gross loan-to-deposit requirements. The Governor, FCA, should evaluate past young farmer programs and identify what programs were successful. The Governor, FCA, should study the current needs of young, beginning, and small farmers and ranchers and identify what programs would meet these needs. The Governor, FCA, should disseminate information to district banks and associations on the types of programs they should consider in developing individual young, beginning, and small farmer programs. The Governor, FCA, should establish specific program goals so that progress toward meeting these goals can be measured and reported.

120739

[Managing the Transportation of U.S.-Donated Food to Developing Countries]. ID-83-24; B-210761. March 3, 1983. 2 pp. plus 1 enclosure (13 pp.).

Report to Rep. Edward R. Madigan, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: Food. Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency of U.S. Efforts To Alleviate Food Problems in Developing Countries (1734); International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151 0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Rep. Edward R. Madigan.

Authority: P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined Agency for International Development (AID) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) procedures for managing the shipping and freight-forwarding functions for the Public Law 480, Title II food donation program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the procedures followed by private-sector freight forwarders in behalf of private voluntary organizations (PVO's) and AID and those used by USDA for booking and forwarding ocean freight are similar and generally adequate to protect the interests of the Federal Government. Further, GAO tests of transactions and information obtained indicated that their performances are not sufficiently different enough to substantially favor one group over another in carrying out the freight-forwarding function. GAO found that private freight forwarders and USDA often obtain more favorable ocean freight rates than those determined

by USDA guidelines and that both groups encourage a high level of competition among ocean carriers to obtain economical rates. The examination of claims, collections, and loss data on food shipped by USDA and the most active PVO's showed that they settled claims within similar timeframes and that there were no significant differences in cargo losses. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should require that procedures be established to routinely examine the actual freight charges which appear on the bills of lading from all program sponsors to help ensure that they do not exceed those determined by its lowest landed cost procedure. The Administrator, AID, should require PVO's to monitor the activities of their freight forwarders by comparing, prior to payment, freight forwarder payment requests with USDA guidelines to verify that ocean freight charges comply with the lowest landed cost determination.

120809

Information on the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's 1983 Standard Reinsurance Agreement. RCED-83-114; B-209866. March 9, 1983. 4 pp. plus 3 appendices (19 pp.).

Report to Rep. William V. Alexander; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. William V. Alexander.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: GAO was asked to review the 1983 Standard Reinsurance Agreement approved by the Board of Directors of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), a Government-owned corporation within the Department of Agriculture. **Findings/Conclusions:** The reinsurance program was established in 1980. In an attempt to involve more private insurance companies and to encourage them to write insurance on all crops nationwide, FCIC has made revisions to the amount of premiums allocated between FCIC and the companies for their portion of risk sharing. At specified times throughout the year, FCIC reimburses companies for the costs associated with operating and administering the program. The amounts paid are based on percentages of premiums collected and net losses incurred, rather than on the private companies' actual costs. GAO stated that FCIC does not require private companies to report the actual cost of providing their services, nor does it have audit procedures to determine whether the reimbursement billings that the private companies submit are valid. GAO was unable to determine from the financial statements available at FCIC whether the reinsured companies had sufficient reserves or assets to bear the risk undertaken.

120829

GAO Staff Views on the President's FY 1984 Budget Proposals. OPP-83-1. March 4, 1983. 117 pp.

Staff Study by Henry Eschwege, Assistant Comptroller General for Planning and Reporting, GAO Office of the Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of Program Planning.

Budget Function: General Government: Central Fiscal Operations (803.0).

Abstract: GAO provided its views on the President's fiscal year 1984 budget proposals. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO based its

analyses on its own work completed or work in progress which is related to program descriptions provided by the President in part 5 of the budget entitled "Meeting National Needs: The Federal Program by Function." Specific areas of discussion include national defense, international affairs, energy, natural resources and environment, agriculture, commerce and housing credit, transportation, community and regional development, health, income security, and general government. Each discussion also includes a list of relevant GAO reports.

120833

Information on the Federal Crop Insurance Program. RCED-83-117; B-209866. March 8, 1983. 2 pp. plus 2 appendices (20 pp.).

Report to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; Rep. Ed Jones

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined certain aspects of the crop insurance program administered by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). *Findings/Conclusions:* GAO found that FCIC methodology for establishing farm yields results in yields that are generally accurate on a countywide basis. However, yields distributed by FCIC to individual farm units often guarantee producers insurance coverage which is either too high or too low. The new FCIC individual coverage plan can provide those farmers who have production records an opportunity to obtain insurance coverage that better reflects their actual production. Monthly interest charges on late premium payments were established to encourage prompt payment and improve FCIC cash flow. Farmers who had insured approximately 22 percent of the total acres insured in 1981 canceled their policies in 1982, citing low coverage and high premiums as the major reason for cancellation. FCIC records showed that 57 percent of the indemnity claims submitted by farmers for crop year 1981, totaling more than \$241 million, took over 30 days to process for payment. State Governments are not providing financial assistance to help farmers pay their FCIC premiums.

120948

[Department of Agriculture Food Surplus Inventories Available for Distribution to Low-Income and Unemployed Persons]. March 22, 1983. 13 pp. plus 5 attachments (7 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, Senior Level, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing and Consumer Relations Subcommittee.

Authority: H.R. 1590 (98th Cong.).

Food Bibliography

Abstract: GAO provided information related to the Department of Agriculture's food surplus inventories available for distribution to low-income and unemployed persons. GAO found that about 86 percent of the butter, 71 percent of the cheese, and 58 percent of the nonfat dry milk in surplus were less than 1 year old. Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation, a wholly owned Government corporation, reported that its costs to store dairy products rose by more than \$20 million between fiscal years (FY's) 1981 and 1982. The Corporation's cost to transport dairy products has also risen, totaling about \$54 million in FY 1982 compared to about \$50 million in FY 1981. Butter is stored in freezer warehouses, cheese is stored in cold storage warehouses, and nonfat dry milk is stored in dry storage warehouses. The Corporation owns substantial quantities of various types of grains, and even greater quantities are stored as collateral for price-support loans. However, much of the grain is not available for use in an emergency food program and some cannot be made into products that would be readily acceptable for use by many people. The Corporation-owned grain is in bulk stock and is not of the best quality. For the school lunch program, the Corporation receives quarterly estimates of the States' needs for food. After receiving these estimates, the oldest dairy products in inventory and the locations of the warehouses in which they are stored are identified. Firms are then selected to process the products based on transportation costs. The procedures used for filling orders under the special butter and cheese distribution are less formal, and the orders are usually filled in the fastest way possible. Nonprofit charitable organizations involved in food assistance programs cite funding, staffing, and transportation as major problems which hamper their efforts.

120969

Legislative Developments. 1982. 2 pp.

by Judith Hatter, GAO Office of Information Systems and Services.

In *The GAO Review*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, Fall 1982, pp. 53-54.

Contact: Office of Information Systems and Services.

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense.

Authority: Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-164; 96 Stat. 25). Olympic Commemorative Coin Act, H.R. 6058 (97th Cong.). H.R. 6158 (97th Cong.). H.R. 6266 (97th Cong.). S. 1230 (97th Cong.). S. 2127 (97th Cong.). S. 2248 (97th Cong.). S. 2352 (97th Cong.). S. 2588 (97th Cong.). 28 U.S.C. 2510. 28 U.S.C. 2516(b).

Abstract: This article discusses legislative developments in the Federal Courts Improvement Act, the Olympic Commemorative Coin Act, the Department of Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1983, the Waste and Abuse Information Collection Act, the Competition in Contracting Act, the Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982, and a proposal for fee setting for the service of civil process.

121036

Changes Are Needed To Assure Accurate and Valid Wheat Deficiency Payments. RCED-83-50; B-210546. March 29, 1983. 27 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Statistical Reporting Service; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-86).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) system for making deficiency payments to wheat farmers. These payments are designed to supplement eligible wheat farmers' income in the years when wheat prices are low. **Findings/Conclusions:** Farmers participating in the wheat crop program receive deficiency payments from USDA based on the difference between a target price and the lower national average market price of wheat. GAO believes that changes are necessary to ensure that accurate and valid payments are being made. Under the current system, overpayments or underpayments to farmers could be caused by: (1) inaccurate data which are used to establish the national average market price; (2) procedures used to determine production for the purpose of computing program payment amounts which overstate farmers' actual production; and (3) the imprecise method being used to calculate yields for farmers submitting evidence of actual production. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Statistical Reporting Service to adopt procedures to: (1) institute a system of quality control for the prices-received survey as suggested by the 1980 statisticians' report; (2) convey to enumerators the need for them to perform their job correctly and follow up to ensure that they do; (3) provide to each state a standard survey questionnaire with reporting instructions to eliminate possible reporting bias resulting from differing instructions and that clearly explain the purpose and importance of the survey; and (4) institute a followup program to obtain missing reports of quantities sold and amounts paid from grain buyers who were unable to provide requested data during the reported month; this would allow grain buyers more time to report accurate data and eliminate the need for using estimated average prices to compute the estimated average market price. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) to: (1) develop an acceptable adjustment for the deficiency payment program that properly accounts for the unharvested acreage on which payments are made; and (2) conduct a comprehensive analysis of the crop yield distributions to determine the extent to which program yields are inadequately assigned and develop crop yield frequency distributions for counties or similar areas to assist county committees in assigning yields to individual farms.

121113

Political and Economic Factors Influencing Economic Support Fund Programs. ID-83-43; B-211263. April 18, 1983. 36 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Report to Rep. Clement J. Zablocki, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Participation of the U.S. Private Sector in the Development Process (0635).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of State; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Rep. Clement J. Zablocki.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2346 et seq.). International Security Assistance Act of 1978.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO described and analyzed the allocation of bilateral foreign aid through the Economic Support Fund (ESF). **Findings/Conclusions:** Because foreign aid is used to further U.S. foreign policy objectives, ESF assistance has grown rapidly since 1975. The ESF provided \$2.8 billion to 32 countries in 1982 and increased funding has been requested for fiscal year 1984. This growth is also related to a weak world economy and to an expanded range of foreign policy objectives, which include: (1) furthering peace in the Middle East; (2) facilitating the transition to majority rule in southern Africa; (3) strengthening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies; (4) ensuring access to the Persian Gulf; and (4) restoring stability to the Caribbean Basin. Although ESF does respond to economic need, higher aid levels may be used to communicate political messages, because few restrictions govern the fund's uses or the countries' eligibilities to receive aid. GAO found that ESF programs: (1) are not governed by an overall formula for determining their composition; (2) are structured on a country-specific basis; and (3) are provided through projects, cash, commodity import financing, and sector assistance. GAO also found that decisions on determining funding terms are not consistently based on per capita income.

121136

[Policies and Practices of ACTION]. April 19, 1983. 18 pp. **Testimony** before the House Committee on Education and Labor: Select Education Subcommittee; by Robert A. Peterson, Senior Associate Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Organization Concerned: ACTION; ACTION; VISTA.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Education and Labor: Select Education Subcommittee.

Authority: Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973. Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. P.L. 97-92. P.L. 97-161. ACTION Order 4301.1.

Abstract: GAO discussed ACTION efforts to redirect the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program funds, new ACTION initiatives directed toward achieving antipoverty-related results, the use of assigned volunteers, and hiring practices of noncareer employees. Currently, major programs of ACTION include VISTA, Young Volunteers in Action (YVA), and the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program (VVLV), as well as Older American Volunteer Programs. A current ACTION goal is to end the VISTA program. The President's budget proposed terminating VISTA in 1984. In 1981, ACTION denied refunding for 14 VISTA projects on the basis that the projects had been receiving VISTA funding beyond 3 years, but required that ACTION competitively judge those projects seeking renewal for a fourth year, along with other projects. GAO stated that, based on a review of YVA activity reports, it appears that more than 75 percent of the YVA activities can be described as community services rather than poverty-related services. However, approximately 40 percent of the activities being performed by VISTA volunteers on VVLV projects seem inappropriate.

121137

[General Accounting Office's Review of Efforts To Reduce Food Stamp Program Losses]. April 20, 1983. 14 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, Senior Level, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.
Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee.

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. S. Rept. 80-6.

Abstract: GAO discussed the need for greater efforts to recover costs of food stamps obtained through error or fraud. Much of GAO work with the Food Stamp Program focuses on prevention and recovery of Federal losses from overissued food stamp benefits. There is also a legitimate concern that eligible program recipients receive their full entitlement. A major reason for overissuances is that many applicants and recipients do not accurately report changes involving household income, assets, size, or allowable program deductions. Although States and the Department of Agriculture have identified specific cases or erroneous issuances through various procedures, they have not placed major emphasis on identifying households that obtained benefits to which they were not entitled. GAO believes that more emphasis on identification and pursuit of overissuance cases is needed. Various mechanisms exist to identify specific cases with errors, ranging from improving routine operating procedures to the use of computer matching and error-prone profiles. Computer matching, especially for wages, is a promising technique for identifying erroneous cases and preventing losses. After matching, a caseworker followup would be required to reconcile discrepancies. GAO concluded that other measures, such as retrospective accounting, periodic reporting, requirements for providing social security numbers, longer disqualification periods for fraud, use of photo identification, and authority to require revisions in State benefit issuance procedures should also have a favorable impact on reducing Food Stamp Program losses.

121151

Small Percentage of Military Families Eligible for Food Stamps. FPCD-83-25; B-201405 April 19, 1983. 11 pp. plus 6 appendices (18 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary, Department of Defense; by Clifford I. Gould, Director, GAO Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Issue Area: Military Personnel: Achievement of Cost Savings and Efficiencies in Military Compensation and Support Systems Without Impairing Effectiveness (4301); Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744).

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0); National Defense: Military Pay (051.3); Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition Subcommittee.

Authority: P.L. 97-248. S. Rept. 97-494. 7 U.S.C. 2014(d). 37 U.S.C. 101(25).

Abstract: GAO determined whether the reportedly large percentage of military families eligible for food stamps actually met the benefits criteria, and it reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) program administrative practices. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that only a small percentage of military families are eligible to receive food stamps and most of those families qualify

only because their Government-furnished housing is not counted as income. However, there are some families who would be eligible for food stamps regardless of their housing status, and USDA has provided them with the appropriate information concerning their benefits. GAO noted that, under certain circumstances, especially when parents are assigned away from home, there is potential abuse of the program. Inadequate reporting of income and housing status changes also contributes to ineligible families' receiving food stamp benefits. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, should propose legislation to amend 7 U.S.C. 2014(d) to require that Government-furnished housing be included in the gross income computation for determining food stamp eligibility. The Secretary of Agriculture should issue new guidelines that would ensure that households would not become eligible for food stamps solely because of an active duty-related absence. The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the food stamp caseworkers that, in addition to any other recertifications, they should recalculate food stamp eligibility for all military food stamp recipients at the same time the amount of the annually scheduled military pay raise becomes known.

121152

[Agency for International Development's Assistance to Jamaica]. ID-83-45; B-198960. April 19, 1983. 3 pp. plus 1 enclosure (14 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Matching of U.S. Development Assistance to the Greatest Needs and Coordination With Development Efforts of Others in Country and Regional Programs (0631).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Jamaica.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Inter-American Affairs Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Agency for International Development's (AID) assistance program to Jamaica. **Findings/Conclusions:** Balance-of-payments assistance through Economic Support Fund and P.L. 80-480 programs can contribute to development. AID can influence Jamaican economic policies by making assistance conditional on implementation of reforms to encourage private sector and overall economic growth. GAO found that AID has generally not achieved substantial policy reforms. Mission officials believe that it is important to follow through with the AID plan to link assistance to implementation of policy reforms. Foreign exchange provided to Jamaica is intended to finance imports needed by the private sector to increase production and employment. With an improved monitoring process, GAO believes that AID could encourage Jamaica to increase productive imports from the United States. While AID requires that Jamaica provide local currency equivalent to the value of U.S. balance-of-payments assistance for agreed upon development projects and purposes, AID relies upon the Government of Jamaica to select up to 90 percent of the projects which will receive local currency. GAO believes that AID could assume a more active role in identifying and proposing development projects to receive local currency. Further, AID does not plan to perform on-site monitoring of local currency projects to ensure that budget funds are in fact provided for agreed upon purposes.

or to determine whether projects are progressing adequately. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator, AID, should implement a system to monitor actual imports from the United States as a basis for assuring that productive imports from the United States increase. The Administrator, AID, should attempt to identify an increasing portion of the development project for which local currency will be allocated and monitor on a spot basis the end use of the local currency.

121176

[The Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation]. April 20, 1983. 32 pp. plus 8 appendices (15 pp.)

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture. Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: GAO presented information concerning its ongoing review of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) and the implementation of the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 which expanded the crop insurance program and transferred the sales program to private insurance companies. GAO found that, while FCIC made substantial progress in implementing the act, the program was expanded without making the necessary evaluations. Until actuarial problems are resolved, sales and insured acreage participation rates may not increase sufficiently to permit crop insurance to become the predominant income protection mechanism. GAO stated that producers must be offered a policy that combines yield guarantees with reasonable unit price elections at a premium rate commensurate with the underwriting risks. GAO noted that other factors, such as depressed agricultural business conditions and the Government's increased emphasis on reducing planted acreage, will continue to affect producers' decisions to buy crop insurance or to insure themselves. In summary, GAO suggested that the FCIC manager take actions to improve actuarial soundness, compensation rates, the reinsurance program, and quality control.

121262

Dynamic Demographics: Profile of an Aging Population. April 23, 1983. 11 pp. plus 2 appendices (10 pp.).

Speech before the Ohio Academy of Science; by Theresa M. Walter, Evaluator, GAO Field Operations Division: Regional Suboffice (Cleveland).

Contact: Field Operations Division: Regional Suboffice (Cleveland).

Organization Concerned: Ohio Academy of Science.

Abstract: Demographic trends in the United States during the twentieth century were discussed. GAO stated that one of the most striking trends has been the aging of the U.S. population. To express this real and projected growth in numbers of Americans 65 years old and older, the 5 million elderly people in 1920 became 25 million in 1980 and will become 45 million in 2020. Since the United States as a society will eventually face many of the problems which the elderly are dealing with today, several aspects of the future population were profiled in the hope of stimulating thought on life's process.

121263

Federal Regulation of Meat and Poultry Products--Increased Consumer Protection and Efficiencies Needed. RCED-83-68; B-209696. May 4, 1983. 33 pp. plus 1 appendix (9 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Food Quality Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741); Consumer and Worker Protection: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0951).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations. Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) regulation of processed meat and poultry products. The review was made to determine whether: (1) standards have been developed to help ensure consumers of the uniformity and consistency of products; (2) products are properly labeled; and (3) sampling procedures are efficient and effective. **Findings/Conclusions:** Products made with mechanically separated meat and poultry contain some pulverized bone, bone marrow, and certain potentially harmful minerals. Consequently, to protect the public, FSIS established specific standards and labeling requirements on mechanically separated meat (MSM). Although a USDA study has shown that similar health and safety problems exist for mechanically separated poultry (MSP), FSIS has not established specific requirements for these products. Because MSM is different from hand-separated meat in that it contains higher amounts of calcium and cholesterol, FSIS established product standards and labeling requirements to prevent MSM products with misleading labels from being sold to consumers. However, similar action has not been taken to protect consumers from products produced with MSP. In a related issue, FSIS has also established standards on the maximum fat and added water that cooked meat sausage products can contain to ensure the products' nutritional quality, but similar standards on cooked poultry sausage products have not been established. To ensure product compliance, FSIS takes three types of samples on processed meat products; however, GAO believes that changes could be made in each type of sample to improve efficiency and consumer protection. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to establish specific standards on MSP and labeling requirements on products made with MSP as has been done for MSM and products made with MSM. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to establish standards on the maximum fat and added water that cooked poultry and sausages can contain and appropriate sampling procedures to measure compliance with the standards. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to reduce verification sampling at plants with partial quality control systems that have good histories of compliance and reduce split sampling at plants that have accredited laboratories with good histories of compliance. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to enforce its procedures on investigating and resolving major discrepancies on split-sample results between FSIS field laboratories and the accredited laboratories.

The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to provide inspectors with timely results on product compliance. This could be accomplished by reducing the backlog of samples that need to be analyzed at the FSIS field laboratories. By reducing the number of samples as recommended above, fewer samples would be analyzed by the FSIS field laboratories and the sample results would be returned to the inspectors faster. FSIS could also encourage plants to use nearby accredited laboratories.

121267

[Program and Budget Information on the President's Budget for FY 1984]. PAD-83-30; B-197735. February 18, 1983. 4 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Report to Sen. Charles H. Percy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; by Morton A. Myers, Director, GAO Program Analysis Division

Issue Area: Program and Budget Information for Congressional Use; Development and Maintenance of an Inventory of Federal Programs (3411).

Contact: Program Analysis Division.

Budget Function: Congressional Information Services (990.5).

Organization Concerned: Government-Wide.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Sen. Charles H. Percy.

Authority: P.L. 97-241. 31 U.S.C. 1113.

Abstract: GAO presented material for consideration in preparation of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's views and estimates report on the President's fiscal year (FY) 1984 budget proposals. **Findings/Conclusions:** Appropriation accounts and budget functions under the committee's jurisdiction reflect increases of \$969 million in budget authority and \$2 billion in outlays for FY 1984. Outlays for international affairs would increase by \$1.3 billion with major increases in foreign aid which includes economic and military assistance. Specific program areas which are targeted for increases include: International Security Assistance programs, Department of State programs in the conduct of foreign affairs, and foreign information exchange activities which include the Voice of America. Outlays for international financial programs and the Export-Import Bank are also estimated to increase. Reductions in outlays are estimated for the Department of the Treasury, the Exchange Stabilization Fund, and the Foreign Military Sales Program. GAO noted that the International Communication Agency was redesigned as the U.S. Information Agency and that a number of programs under the committee's jurisdiction would require reauthorization.

121285

[Aging Issues in the 1980's: A Computerized Information System]. April 23, 1983. 4 pp. plus 2 appendices (5 pp.).

Speech before the Ohio Academy of Science; by William F. Laurie, Project Manager, GAO Field Operations Division; Regional Suboffice (Cleveland).

Contact: Field Operations Division: Regional Suboffice (Cleveland).

Organization Concerned: Ohio Academy of Science.

Abstract: GAO presented material derived from data provided by the White House Conference on Aging. GAO developed a conceptual model, focusing on the health, economic, and social aspects affecting the elderly. GAO also developed an information system on these issues. The major areas of concern include long-term health care, employment, and quality of life. GAO commented that most of these issues would impact budgets and the action taken would involve Federal, State, and local governments and agencies.

Food Bibliography

121341

Food Bibliography. RCED-83-110 April 1983. 155 pp.

by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-73, April 1981, Accession Number 115134.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Abstract: This bibliography includes information on GAO documents which directly or indirectly relate to food, agriculture, or nutrition which were released between January 1981 and December 1982.

121372

[Use of Federally Supported Research Facilities]. May 13, 1983. 7 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Science and Technology: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; by William E. Gahr, Associate Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to RCED-83-20, January 14, 1983, Accession Number 120390.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Science and Technology: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO testified on the joint use of federally supported research facilities by industries and universities. The testimony was based on a report in which GAO concluded that many of the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) 148 domestic research locations were not staffed to their design capacity which makes individual research projects more expensive. The overall underuse has resulted primarily from a declining personnel ceiling as well as construction of new facilities. Notwithstanding this underuse, new laboratories are still being planned. To fully use its existing facilities, ARS would require a substantial increase in its annual appropriations and higher personnel ceilings. ARS has closed some facilities and transferred staff to other locations to improve facility use. However, this approach has not been very successful. ARS has also leased or provided research space to other Federal or State agencies and has improved facility use with support personnel hired under cooperative agreements. It has also contracted out certain support services to retain scientists and technicians. GAO has found that closing research facilities and consolidating their functions may be the most viable alternative for reducing the underused capacity. ARS does not have a comprehensive plan to reduce the number of ARS-owned research locations, and many factors need to be considered in developing such a plan. In addition, establishing research priorities is an important factor in developing a comprehensive plan. In response to a GAO recommendation, ARS is developing a strategic plan as a basis for future research management.

121445

[Incidental Costs of Commemorative Luncheon]. B-208729. May 24, 1983. 3 pp.

Decision re: Department of the Army; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of the Army: Redstone Arsenal, AL; Concerned Citizens of Alabama.

Authority: 43 Comp. Gen. 305, 60 Comp. Gen. 303. B-199387 (1982).

Abstract: The Army requested an advance decision as to whether a voucher may be paid from appropriated funds to support a claim arising from a contract which an Army employee had signed with an Army officers club to provide a luncheon in commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Inclement weather had apparently reduced attendance at the luncheon, and the Army did not earn enough money to meet its revenue obligation to the officers club. Although the employee was liable for the remaining amount, the Army maintained that an earlier GAO decision classified the luncheon as an administrative expense to further social and cultural programs. GAO concurred with the Army's claim and held that, since the luncheon was designed to further equal employment opportunity objectives and revenue from the meals was anticipated to produce the guaranteed revenue, payment of the debt was sanctioned by the earlier GAO decision. Accordingly, payment may be made with appropriated funds.

121460

[*Medicaid and Nursing Home Care Across the States*]. May 23, 1983. 14 pp. plus 10 attachments (11 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce: Transportation and Commerce Subcommittee; by Garry L. McDaniels, Deputy Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee.

Authority: Social Security Amendments of 1965. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Abstract: GAO presented information concerning Medicaid and nursing home care across the States. Because the Nation's elderly population is increasing rapidly, an increase in future demand for nursing home care can also be expected. This trend will strongly impact Medicaid which is the major payer of nursing home care costs. GAO found that: (1) most State reimbursement systems are not designed to pay for the cost of each patient's care needs; (2) States are trying to limit their bed supplies because of their effect on Medicaid expenditures; and (3) attempts to reduce hospital backup may be expensive. GAO made several concluding observations: (1) improvements are needed to increase the efficiency of Medicaid nursing home services; (2) better reimbursement systems and other incentive mechanisms need to be developed; and (3) adequate utilization review and survey and certification procedures are important. GAO stated that research is needed to determine whether some individuals could be served in settings other than nursing homes and whether there is justification for the variation in the number of nursing home beds between States. GAO also concluded that serious information gaps exist in basic Medicaid data.

121461

[*The Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation*]. May 26, 1983. 32 pp. plus 8 appendices (15 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: GAO presented information concerning its ongoing review of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) and the implementation of the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 which expanded the crop insurance program and transferred the sales program to private insurance companies. GAO found that, while FCIC made substantial progress in implementing the act, the program was expanded without necessary evaluations. Until actuarial problems are resolved, sales and insured acreage participation rates may not increase sufficiently to permit crop insurance to become the predominant income protection mechanism. GAO stated that producers must be offered a policy that combines yield guarantees with reasonable unit price elections at a premium rate commensurate with the underwriting risks. GAO noted that other factors, such as depressed agricultural business conditions and the Government's increased emphasis on reducing planted acreage, will continue to affect producers' decisions to buy crop insurance or to insure themselves. In summary, GAO suggested that the FCIC manager take actions to improve actuarial soundness, compensation rates, the reinsurance program, and quality control.

121490

[*U.S. Government Actions Affecting Rice Sales to Korea*]. ID-83-48; B-211734. May 18, 1983. Released May 31, 1983. 8 pp. plus 3 enclosures (23 pp.).

Report to Rep. Eugene A. Chappie; Rep. Vic Fazio; Rep. Tony Coelho; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO International Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Effectiveness of Government Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Competitive International Trading System (0623); Food: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Maintain Strong U.S. Commercial Agricultural Exports (1742).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of State; Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Vic Fazio; Rep. Eugene A. Chappie; Rep. Tony Coelho.

Authority: Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2101). Rice Understanding of 1980, United States-Japan.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the actions of Government agencies concerning Japanese and commercial U.S. sales of rice to Korea. **Findings/Conclusions:** U.S. Government officials believe that the 1980 U.S.-Japan Rice Understanding achieved its purpose of limiting Japanese subsidized exports which were detrimental to U.S. rice producers and exporters. However, GAO noted that other concerned parties expressed dissatisfaction with ambiguities in the exchange of letters that constitute the understanding. Under the emergency clause of the understanding, exceptions were granted which allowed Japan to sell more than 2 million tons of rice to Korea in 1980-1981. GAO found that there was no documentation evidencing who approved the exceptions or what factors were considered and no written agreement as to the future actions by the United States, Japan, and Korea regarding exceptions. Further, GAO found that difficulties and delays affected the 1981 rice commitment. GAO believes that any future agreements should have greater specificity. However, GAO stated that there does not appear to be a need at this time for a more formal framework among the Departments of Agriculture and State and the U.S. Trade Representative concerning actions related to the understanding.

121491

[Community Agencies Aiding the Poor in Sanford, Florida: Results of Federal Audits and Investigations]. HRD-83-55; B-211715 May 20, 1983. Released May 27, 1983. 3 pp. plus 1 enclosure (11 pp.)

Report to Rep. Bill McCollum; by Philip A. Bernstein, (for Richard L. Fogel, Director), GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Federal and Community Efforts To Provide Reasonable Assurance That Available Resources Are Safeguarded and Used To Meet Poor's Needs (1341).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development: Community Development (451.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Commerce; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Seminole Employment Economic Development Corp.; Sanford, FL: Sanford Housing Authority; Seminole Community Action, Inc.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Bill McCollum.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reported on audit and investigation findings related to three community agencies in Florida which provide services for the poor. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO stated that the three agencies involved have encountered a variety of problems, including recurring internal management problems, termination of federally funded programs, improper use of funds, and weak internal financial controls. Federal and State officials have addressed and responded to the most significant of the audit and investigation findings and have taken or planned actions to resolve most of the problems. Officials concluded that continued funding of the three agencies will depend largely on the future availability of Federal funds.

121513

Questionable Practices in the Selection of Transportation Services for Small Lots of Hazardous or Sensitive Cargo. PLRD-83-70; B-211456. May 31, 1983. 3 pp plus 4 appendices (23 pp.).

Report to Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary, Department of Defense; by Donald J. Horan, Director, GAO Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division.

Issue Area: Logistics Management: Efficiency of the Distribution of Material and the Movement of Personnel (3814).

Contact: Procurement, Logistics, and Readiness Division.

Budget Function: National Defense: Department of Defense - Military (Except Procurement and Contracting) (051.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of the Navy; Department of the Army; Department of the Air Force; Department of the Army: Military Traffic Management Command.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; House Committee on Armed Services; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Armed Services; Sen. Howard H. Baker.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed Department of Defense (DOD) policies and practices for procuring commercial transportation services for small lots of hazardous or sensitive cargo. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found a number of problem areas in the management of small-lot shipments of hazardous and sensitive cargo that resulted in excess

transportation costs and lost opportunities to use the best possible transportation services. Specifically, GAO found that: (1) most of the cargo had been routed to truck companies, although air taxi rates and services were competitive with truck rates and services; (2) a specific air taxi operator received a greater portion of the traffic than another operator who was in a position to compete effectively; (3) military routing officials had not followed DOD policies and criteria on routing; and (4) overall and specific DOD cargo shipping requirements, such as the location of the traffic and its pickup and transit needs, were not being adequately transmitted to companies wishing to compete for DOD business. **Recommendation To Agencies:** MTMC should compile, maintain, and use information related to installation shipping and receiving capability and to carrier performance that will ensure equitable consideration of both air taxi and truck carrier services in the routing of small lots of hazardous or sensitive cargo. MTMC should routinely make cost and other types of comparative analyses of both air taxi and truck service when routing small lots of hazardous or sensitive cargo. MTMC should enhance competition between air taxi operators and truck carriers by regularly disclosing to them the opportunities for them to participate in the business. The Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) should ensure that sufficient records are maintained to demonstrate to interested parties, such as carriers, that equitable cargo distribution policies are being followed.

121518

Status of U.S.-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation. ID-83-32; B-205154. May 26, 1983. Released June 2, 1983. 25 pp. plus 7 appendices (19 pp.).

Report to Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, Chairman, House Committee on International Relations: International Operations Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Management of Foreign Affairs (0614).

Contact: International Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Transportation; Department of State; Department of Commerce; United States-Saudi Arabian Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; Rep. Lee H. Hamilton.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2357). Technical Cooperation Agreement, November 25, 1979, United States-Saudi Arabia, T.I.A.S. 9691. Technical Cooperation Agreement, February 13, 1975, United States-Saudi Arabia, T.I.A.S. 8072.

Abstract: GAO assessed the organization, operations, and activities of the U.S.-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation. Specifically, GAO reviewed: (1) overall U.S. management of the Commission; (2) how effectively projects are being carried out; and (3) what problems exist and what actions are being taken to resolve them. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, although activities were being carried out without major problems, projects were not being independently evaluated on an ongoing basis. Further, there is a need to establish more specific goals and objectives to allow for program efficiency. GAO found that the importance of transmitting trade information to U.S. businesses needs to be emphasized because not all site team leaders regard trade information dissemination to be their responsibility. GAO noted that many of the problem areas have already been identified by U.S. and Saudi officials, and efforts have been made to solve them. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of the Treasury should direct the U.S.

Coordinator to: (1) work with the Saudi Coordinator and establish specific goals, objectives, and milestones for each project including when U.S. federal employees in operational-type positions can be phased out, and when project goals and objectives will be met and projects terminated; and (2) request that the training coordination group determine whether increased incentives, primarily increased compensation, would improve the availability of Saudi trainees and their subsequent retention. The Secretary of the Treasury, to further ongoing efforts to identify and disseminate information on trade opportunities to U.S. firms, should emphasize to implementing agencies the importance of project team leaders' being fully aware of the Joint Commission trade objective.

121530

A Troubled Project--Rural Water Systems and Environmental Sanitation in Peru. ID-83-42, B-211720. June 2, 1983. 4 pp. plus 2 appendices (26 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Increasing the Effectiveness of U.S. Humanitarian Assistance (0639).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Republic of Peru.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Government Operations; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Abstract: Certain issues relating to a rural water systems and environmental sanitation project in Peru were brought to the attention of the Agency for International Development (AID) because remedial action could be taken. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO has found that, although the project intended to construct 100 water supply systems in four regions by the end of 1982, only 30 water supply systems were installed or under construction in three regions by February 1983. The slow progress stems from difficulties in breaking down the system design and management responsibilities to the local level, personnel shortages and losses, and policy differences. Problems such as the slow procurement and delivery of commodities and equipment and the lack of planned technical assistance have also impeded progress. In addition, GAO found that plans for health education, operation and maintenance training, and special studies to improve the effectiveness of the project had not been fully implemented. Site visits confirmed that there is a lack of coordination in providing water supply, sanitation facilities, and effective public health services. Despite the slow progress, another \$5.5 million was committed to the project in 1982. Now, conflicting cost estimates and inflation raise doubts about the total number of water supply systems which can be financed by the project. GAO believes that the causes of the slow progress were not adequately addressed at the time the additional funds were authorized for the project. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The AID Administrator should direct the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean's Pipeline Review Committee to closely monitor this project. If significant progress is not achieved by the end of 1983, the \$5.5 million authorized by the amendment should be immediately deobligated and the project reduced to a scope which can be effectively managed by Peru. The accelerated implementation plan for 1983 should be the criterion to measure the progress of all components of the project.

121609

[Request for Review of Government of Guam Contract Award]. B-208320. June 9, 1983. 3 pp.

Decision re: Foremost Foods, Inc.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Foremost Foods, Inc.; Guam: Department of Education; Jones & Guerrero Co., Inc.; Department of Agriculture.

Authority: 7 C.F.R. 210.2(i). 7 C.F.R. 210.10(a)(2)(i). 7 C.F.R. 3015.182. 40 Fed. Reg. 42406. B-200842 (1980). B-203855.3 (1982). B-205914.2 (1982). B-208553 (1982).

Abstract: A firm requested review of a contract award to an incumbent under an invitation for bids (IFB) issued by the Government of Guam's Department of Education for milk. The contract was funded by a Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant. The firm contended that the solicitation's 50-percent fresh milk requirement: (1) amounted to a sole-source selection of the incumbent, the only firm claiming it could fulfill the requirement; (2) was not fulfilled by the incumbent in the previous contract; (3) could not be met by any firm and should be reduced significantly or eliminated. Guam stated that the IFB was structured to obtain the greatest percentage of fresh milk for the schoolchildren and to conform to USDA regulations. GAO stated that: (1) the awardee had the low, responsive bid and that the complainant's bid was rejected as nonresponsive because its milk was not pasteurized; (2) since GAO reviews of grant complaints do not deal with contract performance or administration issues, the allegations concerning the awardee's previous contract performance were not for consideration, but were being considered by the contracting agency; (3) regulations governing USDA grants prohibit competition restriction but, once a grantee establishes that the restriction is related to its minimum needs, GAO will not question the determination criteria; and (4) since regulations governing the school lunch program require that fresh milk be provided if available, GAO had no basis to object to the inclusion of the requirement in the solicitation. Accordingly, the complaint was denied.

121639

[Several States Have Not Properly Implemented Certain AFDC Provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981]. HRD-83-56; B-211805. June 8, 1983. 10 pp.

Report to Margaret M. Heckler, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Efficient Administration and Quality of Service of Needs-Based Cash Assistance Programs (1332).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Social Security Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health, Education and Welfare Subcommittee; House Committee on Ways and Means; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Finance.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). 45 C.F.R. 200. 45 C.F.R. 300. 45 C.F.R. 400.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the implementation of provisions of title XXIII of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, which affects the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found variances in the way some states implemented the following provisions: (1) the

150-percent income limit for eligibility; (2) the treatment of lump-sum income tax refunds as either a resource or income for eligibility or benefit payment amount purposes; and (3) special-need allowances for pregnant women. The administration expected these provisions to save the government about \$22 million in fiscal year 1982. The variances that GAO found in implementation could result in the government's not realizing the full savings anticipated and may result in inequitable treatment of segments of the AFDC population. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to require Illinois, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin to include special-need allowances in computing the 150-percent income limit for determining AFDC eligibility and to advise applicants previously denied assistance that they may be eligible and can reapply. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to monitor New York's compliance with federal requirements to include special-need allowances in its computing the 150-percent income limit to ensure that compliance is achieved. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to require New York to comply with its state regulations by using actual rent paid by a client in computing the 150-percent income limit when such rent is less than the maximum regional shelter allowances and removing from the rolls those with income that exceeds the reduced income limit. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to determine whether other states, those not covered by the GAO review, are applying the 150-percent income limit improperly and correct any problems found. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to issue regulations after litigation has been completed on the issue of whether income tax refunds are to be considered as income for AFDC purposes, describing how income tax refunds are to be treated under the lump-sum payment provision by the states, or seek appropriate clarifying legislation if final court decisions are not consistent. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to advise the states that failure to specify in their state plans the circumstances under which the special-need allowances for pregnancy will be granted and to determine that a need actually exists in each case for the first and subsequent pregnancies will result in their state's plans being out of compliance with federal requirements and could result in the withholding of federal financial participation. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to advise Minnesota that, since it has chosen to provide special-need allowances, it is not in compliance with federal requirements by placing a ceiling on the total amount it will spend each year for all special-need allowances.

121728

[Clinical Testing of Anticancer Drugs]. June 23, 1983. 19 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; by Edward A. Densmore, Deputy Director, GAO Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-83-52, September 26, 1983, Accession Number 122524.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Department of Health and Human Services; National Institutes of Health; National Cancer Institute.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

Abstract: Testimony was given concerning a GAO review of the clinical testing of anticancer drugs and the regulation of that testing by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The review

was conducted in response to congressional interest in the adequacy of existing policy, practices, and procedures within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with respect to the protection of individuals who participate in federally sponsored trials of investigational new drugs (IND's). GAO stated that FDA and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) are making improvements in ensuring that patients involved in the clinical testing of anticancer drugs are protected. However, GAO did identify problems in that: (1) FDA has no followup system to ensure that IND sponsors address its recommendations; (2) FDA does not always receive from sponsors, or promptly review, IND amendments; (3) clinical investigators and drug sponsors do not always promptly report adverse drug reactions; and (4) FDA and NCI need to improve monitoring of clinical testing. GAO is making a number of proposals to the Secretary of HHS to address these and other problems associated with the protection of patients during testing.

121734

[Agricultural Research]. June 22, 1983. 9 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to CED-81-141, July 21, 1981, Accession Number 116007; RCED-83-89, January 31, 1983, Accession Number 120452; and RCED-83-20, January 14, 1983, Accession Number 120390.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee.

Authority: Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act (National) (P.L. 97-98).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, testimony was given concerning the results of some GAO reviews related to: (1) long-range planning for Department of Agriculture (USDA) research and development activities; (2) agricultural economic research and analysis activities; and (3) the use of Federal agricultural research facilities. GAO has suggested that Federal and State research organizations cooperate in making a food needs assessment and determining the research alternatives that would help meet those needs, and Congress has directed USDA to make a food needs assessment in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act. In response to a GAO recommendation, USDA has undertaken development of a long-range plan for in-house agricultural research. Another GAO report stated that little has been done to plan, prioritize, and coordinate agricultural economics research and analysis, and that there is disagreement on the roles of the system's major participants. USDA has recently established a new position to administer planning and organizational relations, has begun developing a long-term plan that will involve land-grant institutions in this planning process, and is preparing a new statement of mission. A further GAO report concluded that many of the USDA research facilities were not staffed to design capacity, making research projects more expensive. GAO recommended that USDA develop a plan to consolidate agricultural research activities at fewer locations which would consider research priorities, employee relocation costs, and the potential sales values of unneeded laboratories. The Agricultural Research Service is developing a plan to use as a basis for future research management which should be an excellent basis to ensure the consolidation of research and more efficient use of facilities.

121751

Improved Management of Import Meat Inspection Program Needed. RCED-83-81; B-210221 June 15, 1983. 58 pp. plus 3 appendices (21 pp.)

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to Testimony, July 27, 1983, Accession Number 122003.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Food Quality Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741); Consumer and Worker Protection Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.*

Authority: Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's administration of its import meat and poultry inspection program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, at the 10 highest volume ports where variances in the quantities of meat rejected ranged from 0.1 to 1.5 percent, procedures for controlling, sampling, and inspecting meat products differed because of: (1) regulations and instructions which were generally outdated, unclear, and inconsistent; (2) a lack of adequate supervision and training of inspection personnel; and (3) workload imbalance. The Automated Import Information System compiles inspection-result histories for countries and foreign plants. These histories are the basis for assigning the scope and extent of inspections. GAO found that, in some ways, regulations and instructions do not conform with the system's revised procedures. GAO and Food Safety and Inspection Service officials found that most inspectors cited the need for periodic training and better communication between inspectors from different ports as a way of standardizing inspections. Despite the apparent improvement in plant conditions, program changes are needed to better ensure that products are imported only from countries and plants meeting U.S. requirements. Recognizing the need for increased attention to foreign programs' regulatory comparability, the Service is developing a new systems approach for approving and monitoring foreign inspection systems. GAO believes that the new system should improve the Service's ability to assess these risks. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service Administrator to revise the meat and poultry inspection regulations, the manual, and other written instructions to provide clear, concise, and up-to-date guidance on the procedures import inspectors are to use in controlling, sampling, and inspecting products offered for entry. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to develop criteria for distinguishing among minor, major, and critical defects in canned packaged meat products. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to authorize, through regulations, skip-lot sampling procedures for boneless manufacturing meat. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to prescribe the procedures for inspectors to use in handling skip lots. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to prescribe procedures for adequately and consistently controlling import meat

products and inspection samples. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to provide guidance to inspectors on the correct procedures for selecting samples shipped in combination bins. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to establish new sampling techniques for wholesale cuts and carcasses which do not limit inspection to a predetermined portion of the product for major and critical defects. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to emphasize to import inspectors that foreign inspection certificates be prepared in accordance with Service-prescribed procedures. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service Administrator to require that all inspection personnel be provided periodic refresher training and establish a structured on-the-job training program. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service Administrator to assign an inspector-in-charge to all major ports, with appropriate written descriptions of responsibilities and duties, including a systematic review of case files. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to develop work measurement standards to use in ensuring that ports are adequately staffed by full-time and/or temporary inspectors. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to revise the meat and poultry inspection manual to specify the procedures foreign program officers are to follow in reviewing plants. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to develop more uniform objective criteria for use in reviewing and rating foreign plants. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to revise the foreign plant review form to better identify problems for future followup. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service Administrator to emphasize to foreign inspection system officials that they are responsible for identifying and correcting deficiencies and, if warranted, delisting plants and request that they advise the Service of the reason(s) for each delistment. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food Safety and Inspection Service to develop a more systematic and objective way of compiling the results of plant reviews, using a statistically selected sampling of plants as a basis for appraising management of the overall effectiveness of foreign inspection systems in ensuring compliance with U.S. requirements. Periodic reviews of plants outside the sample should be made at least annually for considering such factors as volume of exports and rejections at U.S. ports. Plants not exporting to the United States should not be reviewed.

121784

Public and Private Efforts To Feed America's Poor. RCED-83-164; B-211858. June 23, 1983. Released June 28, 1983. 33 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.).

Report to Rep. Dennis E. Eckart; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Action To Improve Efficiency in Food Marketing (1740).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605 0); Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. Dennis E. Eckart.*

Authority: Tax Reform Act of 1976. Agricultural Act of 1980. P.L. 96-8. H.R. 1513 (98th Cong.). H.R. 1590 (98th Cong.). S. 17 (98th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on (1) the Nation's economic climate and its impact on food assistance needs; (2) some of the efforts occurring at Federal, State, local, and private levels to meet these needs, including the channeling of surplus food to the poor and hungry; and (3) some of the impediments which inhibit a more effective and efficient food assistance system. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO noted that an accurate assessment of the extent of U.S. hunger and malnutrition does not exist. However, significant increases in the numbers of people seeking food assistance during the past few years have been reported. The task of providing food assistance to the Nation's poor is one which is shared by Federal, State, and local governments and the private sector. The funding levels of Federal food programs have increased at an average annual rate of 26 percent since 1969, and some fear exists that fiscal restraint is having a serious impact on the poor. The private sector has increased its share of food assistance by establishing many new emergency food centers and expanding older ones. In recent years, new Federal and State laws have encouraged, through financial incentives and reduced liability, greater involvement by the food industry in helping to meet the food needs of the poor. Many of the 33 emergency food centers GAO visited reported a need for more funds and problems regarding: (1) insufficient transportation, equipment, and fuel; (2) inadequate storage space; and (3) a need for more staff. The food centers have also been experiencing a lack of coordination and a need for greater quantities and varieties of food in the Department of Agriculture's special cheese and butter distribution program. Finally, GAO found that no analysis has been made of the Federal food programs' overall effectiveness, the amount of food wasted annually, or the relationship between the Federal and private networks of food programs.

121822

Organizational, Personnel, and Office Location Changes Made by the Food and Nutrition Service. RCED-83-138; B-208771. June 30, 1983. Released July 6, 1983. 6 pp. plus 3 appendices (27 pp.).

Report to Rep. Carl D. Perkins, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor: Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improvement of the Effectiveness and Integrity of Child Nutrition Programs (1745).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Education and Labor: Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee; *Rep.* Carl D. Perkins.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on certain organizational and personnel changes made since January 1981 at the Food and Nutrition Service and on the move of the Service's headquarters from Washington, D.C., to the Virginia suburbs. GAO examined: employee qualifications and positions, White House involvement in Service personnel actions, fundamental changes in some Service organizations, and the impact of the relocation of Service headquarters. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO noted that almost half of the top level personnel were replaced as a result of organizational changes, although most of the replacements had been involved with the Service for nearly 15 years. Three management positions are currently vacant and another was eliminated in 1981. GAO found

that the White House has not had a direct influence in Service hirings, although the Service's top three officials are White House appointees and six other officials must receive White House approval before being hired. In an effort to streamline and improve operations, the Service transferred from its headquarters to the regional offices daily financial management operations and reorganized its headquarters financial management organization. GAO noted that the Service was making improper salary payments for the services of two non-Service employees. Finally, GAO noted that the new Service headquarters in the local suburbs has made it less accessible to the Department of Agriculture's downtown headquarters, and employee access to eating facilities remains a problem.

121877

[Comments on HCFA Regional Office Report on New Jersey's Diagnostic Related Group Prospective Reimbursement Experiment]. HRD-83-63; B-211835. June 15, 1983. Released July 12, 1983. 12 pp.

Report to Sen. John Heinz, Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Health Programs: Effectiveness of Health Care Regulations, Reimbursement Policies, and Utilization Control Program (1223).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Health Care Services (551.0).

Organization Concerned: Health Care Financing Administration; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Special Committee on Aging; Sen. John Heinz.

Authority: Social Security Act Amendments of 1983 (P.L. 98-21). Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-248).

Abstract: GAO was asked to review a report by the Health Care Financing Administration's (HCFA) New York Regional Office on New Jersey's Diagnostic Related Group hospital prospective payment experiment and to assess the relevance of its findings and recommendations to the administration's proposed Medicare hospital prospective payment system. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the administration's proposed bill was very general and would have granted the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) broad authority to design, implement, and operate the system. Therefore, whether the proposal, if enacted, would have addressed the problems discussed in the HCFA Regional Office report would have depended largely on actions taken by HHS in establishing and operating the payment system. Congress included features in P.L. 98-21 which attempt to address concerns like those expressed in the HCFA Regional Office report.

121878

[Implementation of Section 191 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982]. RCED-83-190; B-212153. July 8, 1983. Released July 11, 1983. 3 pp. plus 2 enclosures (8 pp.).

Report to Rep. Tony P. Hall; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Alternate Mechanisms To Provide Food to Low Income Target Populations (1746).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0); Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Defense; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Transportation.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Tony P. Hall.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the implementation of a section of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982 which recommends that Federal agencies take steps to distribute surplus food to hungry people and that State and local governments enact donor liability laws to encourage private cooperative efforts to provide food for the hungry as quickly as possible. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, generally, agency officials were unaware of the provisions of the legislation. However, even before the enactment of the section, a number of Federal agencies had taken steps to distribute surplus food. Forty-six States have enacted donor liability laws that encourage private cooperative efforts to feed the hungry. Of the four States that do not have such legislation, one is considering it. GAO believes that the question of whether there is a need for updated estimates of food waste in the United States warrants further examination because such updated estimates could increase awareness of the food waste problem and, perhaps, result in identifying more ways in which the food needs of the poor might be met through the use of edible food that would otherwise be discarded.

121930

AID Assistance to the Eastern Caribbean: Program Changes and Possible Consequences. ID-83-50; B-198960. July 22, 1983. 32 pp.

Report to: M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Matching of U.S. Development Assistance to the Greatest Needs and Coordination With Development Efforts of Others in Country and Regional Programs (0631).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Caribbean Development Bank; Grenada.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1974.

Abstract: GAO reported on the methods the Agency for International Development (AID) uses to administer the U.S. assistance program to the Eastern Caribbean. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, while AID has greatly increased its assistance to the Eastern Caribbean, it has made strategy changes which will place additional burdens on its staff. In the last several years, AID has decreased assistance channeled through the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Although AID has generally been satisfied with CDB performance, a conflict has arisen because U.S. policy seeks to deny assistance to the Government of Grenada and CDB prohibits the exclusion of potential assistance recipients based on political grounds. GAO believes that there are several solutions to this problem, including the use of CDB to administer trust funds for specific activities on a particular island. In addition, AID has recently initiated projects to provide assistance directly to Eastern Caribbean governments. However, these bilateral assistance projects will require more staff time and will increase management costs. Because these bilateral programs are recent, AID has not yet developed the strategy documents for individual islands. Finally, GAO found that AID is aggressively promoting private business investment and expansion in the islands. Because the private sector program is in the early stage of implementation, there are few documented results.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should explore with CDB officials the potential use of trust funds through which CDB staff would design and implement AID bilateral projects on a particular island. The Administrator, AID, should ensure that strategy documents are developed for each Eastern Caribbean island which describe: (1) AID present and future bilateral projects on each island; (2) their relationship to AID assistance provided to the islands through regional institutions and other donor's activities; and (3) how these activities respond to each island's development needs, priorities, and objectives. The Administrator, AID, should undertake a comprehensive evaluation of its private sector program in the Eastern Caribbean by the end of fiscal year 1984 to measure: (1) types of business activity resulting from AID projects, their impact on the local economy, and persons benefited, including secondary beneficiaries; (2) if private investment caused jobs to be relocated from elsewhere; and (3) if results achieved justify the costs.

121931

Review of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's Financial Statements for the Year Ended September 30, 1981. AFMD-83-74; B-114834. July 22, 1983. 2 pp. plus 11 attachments (11 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting: Operations, Financial Position, and Changes in Financial Position (2802).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems: Regulatory Accounting Rules and Financial Reporting (998.6); Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: 31 U.S.C. 9105.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) statement of financial position as of September 30, 1981, and the related statements of income and expense and changes in financial position for the year then ended. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that significant accounting and financial reporting policy changes were made as a result of its review. In prior years' financial statements, GAO found that: (1) insurance premium revenue inappropriately included amounts earned in more than one fiscal year (FY) and excluded other amounts that should have been included; (2) losses on claims inappropriately included claims resulting from insurance coverage for more than one FY and excluded other claims that should have been included; and (3) expended and unexpended appropriations were both reported in the statement of financial position. In the FY 1981 financial statements, GAO found that the following accounting and financial reporting changes had occurred: (1) insurance premium revenue included amounts earned in FY 1981 and excluded in any other FY; (2) losses on claims included claims resulting from FY 1981 insurance coverage only; and (3) expended appropriations were reported in the statement of income and expense, and obligated but unexpended appropriations were reported in the statement of financial position.

121956

[Federal Funding of Long-Term Care for the Elderly]. HRD-83-60; B-196673. June 15, 1983. Released July 15, 1983. 7 pp.

Report to Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Claude D. Pepper, Chairman, House Select Committee on Aging: Health and Long-Term Care Subcommittee; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Health Programs: Effectiveness of Health Care Regulations, Reimbursement Policies, and Utilization Control Program (1223).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health, Health Care Services (551.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Health Care Financing Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Select Committee on Aging; Health and Long-Term Care Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Henry A. Waxman; Rep. Claude D. Pepper

Authority: Social Security Act. Older Americans Act of 1965. Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-499). P.L. 98-21.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on the amount of Federal funds that are being spent on long-term care for the elderly under various programs and the amount being spent for backup days of care in acute care hospitals when a lower level of care is needed but unavailable. **Findings/Conclusions:** A Government-funded study found that at least \$13.4 billion in Federal and State funds are being spent under various Government programs to provide long-term care to the elderly and disabled. GAO previously reported that, even though Federal law requires State Medicaid programs to provide the lower cost alternative of skilled nursing facilities (SNF's) for patients who do not require full hospital care, Ohio was not able to provide this lower cost care. Thus, many patients who could not be adequately cared for in SNF's had to be kept in hospitals where costs are much higher. Many Medicaid patients remain in hospitals primarily because SNF's are unwilling to accept them since the State's maximum rate is not sufficient to cover the cost of skilled care, and Medicare patients might become eligible for Medicaid after exhausting their resources. In the first quarter of 1979, 251,849 Medicare and Medicaid inpatient hospital days were approved because the patient was awaiting placement at a lower level of care. Because a comprehensive data base does not exist, GAO was unable to collect national data on backup days approved for payment. The Omnibus Reconciliation Act requires that hospitals be paid by Medicare at the average Medicaid SNF rate in the State for backup days of care when: (1) posthospital care is needed but unavailable; (2) hospital services are not medically necessary; and (3) the patient is entitled to payment for posthospital care. GAO believes that some money could be saved by paying for backup days of hospital care at an SNF rate.

121988

Followup on Actions Needed To Protect Depositors at Federally Examined Grain Warehouses. RCED-83-159; B-202986, July 18, 1983. Released July 28, 1983. 20 pp.

Report to Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-81-112, June 19, 1981, Accession Number 115548.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Marketing Service; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agri-

cultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton.

Authority: Warehouse Act (7 U.S.C. 241 et seq.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on actions taken by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) in response to recommendations contained in a 1981 GAO report. **Findings/Conclusions:** In that report, GAO found that the development and use of a reliable formula for predicting warehouses that may go bankrupt in the foreseeable future would make the Federal warehouse examination program more effective. Accordingly, appropriate action was recommended to the Secretary of Agriculture. As a result, USDA is in the process of developing a predictive formula. GAO also noted that, in response to a recommendation calling for stricter financial reporting requirements, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) amended their regulations. AMS regulations now require that warehouse financial statements be audited or reviewed by an independent certified public accountant and that they will be accepted with the understanding that the warehouse may be subject to an onsite examination and audit. CCC regulations provide that financial statements may be accompanied by a report of audit or review conducted by an independent certified public accountant. GAO stated that, because review and compilation reports do not contain an accountant's opinion, they do not provide USDA with sufficiently reliable financial information on warehouses. **Recommendation To Agencies:** Although USDA has made changes in its financial reporting regulations, USDA should revise its regulations to require that federally examined warehouses submit annual financial statements accompanied by an audit report prepared by an independent certified public accountant or independent public accountant.

121995

[The Caribbean Basin Initiative]. May 20, 1982. 6 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; by Samuel W. Bowlin, Associate Director for Development Assistance, GAO International Division.

Contact: International Division.

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed concerns arising from the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and identified certain premises that Congress and the administration should consider before acting on proposed legislation. GAO believes that economic recovery in the region depends on solving individual national problems, involvement by each recipient country, effective coordination of CBI funds, and a legal distinction between CBI funds and bilateral cash transfers. GAO noted that the proposed CBI to rehabilitate regional economies has caused several problems, because: (1) legislation designed to induce private sector firms to invest in Caribbean-based economies is lacking in details and specifics; (2) a reduction of tariffs on Caribbean imports will likely have an adverse affect on domestic competition; (3) CBI funds can be easily misused, and (4) new CBI initiatives will make it difficult to attain total coordination of the program

122003

[Agriculture's Import Meat Inspection Program]. July 27, 1983. 17 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, Senior Level, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to RCED-83-81, June 15, 1983, Accession Number 121751.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture; Food Safety and Inspection Service

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture: Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee.*

Abstract. In testimony before a congressional subcommittee, GAO discussed its recent report which addressed the need for improved management of the Department of Agriculture's import meat inspection program. GAO had noted that Agriculture did not have a sound basis for comparing foreign countries' overall inspection systems with U.S. inspection methods. GAO had recommended that the agency develop procedures and criteria for reviewing and rating foreign plants and a more systematic method of compiling the results of plant reviews to assess foreign inspection systems' effectiveness in ensuring compliance with U.S. requirements. GAO stated that the agency disagreed with the recommendations directed at improving foreign plant reviews but agreed in principle with the recommendation to sample foreign plants to be reviewed.

122025

[GAO Work Related to the Toxic Substances Control Act and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act]. July 29, 1983. 9 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee*

Authority: Toxic Substances Control Act. Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed its work concerning the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) implementation of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and the Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (IFRA). Since TSCA enactment in 1976, GAO has issued four reports which address EPA efforts to implement the legislative requirements of the act, EPA regulatory action on specific chemicals, and EPA use of voluntary testing agreements. GAO has two reviews underway which concern the new EPA chemicals program and EPA use of various TSCA authorities to investigate and regulate existing chemicals. Since the early 1970's, GAO has issued 17 reports concerning IFRA and EPA efforts relative to it, dealing primarily with: (1) the registration, control, and use of individual pesticides; (2) EPA policies and procedures for registering and reregistering pesticides; and (3) EPA effectiveness in enforcing compliance with registration requirements. The most recent report recommended that guidance be developed for EPA regional offices to assess State efforts in identifying major misuse problems and inadequate application practices.

122111

[Interim Report on Establishment of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the Adequacy of Superfund Staff Resources]. HRD-83-81; B-207182. August 10, 1983. 7 pp.

Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Health Programs: Effectiveness of Federal Efforts To Improve Health Through Control of Environmental Health Hazards (1266); Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Federal and State Programs in Reducing the Environmental and Health Dangers Posed by Hazardous and Solid Wastes (2221)

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health (550.0); Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0), Natural Resources and Environment (300.0); Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Environmental Protection Agency; Public Health Service; Centers for Disease Control; Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Rep. James J. Florio.*

Authority: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-510). S. 1285 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO conducted a review of Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) responsibilities under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act which authorized the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a Superfund Program to clean up toxic waste sites and HHS to establish a new Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to carry out the act's health-related activities. *Findings/Conclusions:* GAO found that, although the agency was established in 1983, HHS is operating the program under essentially the same interagency arrangement, involving several Public Health Service (PHS) agencies, that has been in effect since 1981. This approach has reduced the priority of Superfund activities and resulted in program delays. Further, PHS has not yet developed procedures detailing how the Superfund responsibilities will be carried out. Although Congress required HHS to establish a separate agency to ensure some independence and priority for Superfund activities, the activities have been integrated into existing organizations and have been delayed because of competition with other agency responsibilities. They have also been hampered because of the level of staff resources allowed relative to the amount of funds appropriated by Congress. Because of the lack of staff, officials expect to eliminate virtually all long-term health studies, registries, and laboratory projects.

122129

Equitable Interest Rates Are Needed for Farmers Home Administration Loans. RCED-83-157; B-211882. August 12, 1983. 37 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.).

Report to John R. Bldock, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Baltas E. Birkle, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: Domestic Housing and Community Development: Effectiveness of the Nation's Rural Development Policy (2140); Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: Other Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (4051).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Interest: Other Interest (902.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.*

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921). Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1471) 7 U.S.C. 1927. 7 U.S.C. 1946. 42 U.S.C. 1490a

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) policies, procedures, and practices for setting and revising interest rates on farm, home, and community facility loans.

Findings/Conclusions: Between June 1981 and March 1982, FmHA approved about 94,000 housing and farm loans whose borrowers will receive subsidies or pay premiums totalling \$112 million over the life of their loans. GAO noted that, because subsidies will exceed premiums, FmHA program costs on these loans could be increased by as much as \$94 million. GAO found that FmHA has not developed an adequate rate review or decisionmaking process to allow judicious use of its discretionary authority to set interest rates on housing and farm loans. Specifically, the cutoff point for changing rates was an estimate established without analysis. Further, FmHA application of its own guidelines has resulted in inconsistencies. GAO stated that the lack of criteria resulted in inequitable treatment of borrowers within the same programs, and it questioned the 25-year period FmHA uses to set rates on real estate loans and the use of the municipal bond rate to set rates on community facility loans.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture, to provide for changes in farm and home loan program interest rates in a timely, economical, and equitable manner, should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to revise interest rates monthly, setting new rates at the Treasury monthly cost-of-money rate with appropriate adjustments for limited-resource farm loans. The Secretary of Agriculture, to facilitate this change without adversely affecting the FmHA workload, should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to implement rate changes by the 5th work day of each month and require FmHA county supervisors to determine the maximum rate applicants can pay. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Administrator, FmHA, before extending FmHA authority, to develop specific, quantitative criteria to identify and weigh other factors in setting loan program interest rates. The Secretary of Agriculture, to better comply with the requirements of FmHA authorizing legislation, should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to use a 30-year maturity period to set interest rates on farm ownership, including limited-resource farm ownership, and single family housing loans. The Secretary of Agriculture, to ensure continued validity of the maturity period being used to set interest rates, should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to periodically determine the actual maturity period of FmHA loans. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to use a revenue bond index to determine bond market rates for the purpose of setting interest rates on community facility loans.

122162

The Oregon Production Index: A Sound Fishery Management Tool That Can Be Improved. RCED-83-185; B-207048. August 15, 1983. Released August 22, 1983. 24 pp. plus 6 appendices (10 pp.).

Report to Rep. Les AuCoin; by Baltas E. Birkle, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Trends in Fish Productivity and Opportunities for Improvements (1739).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment; Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: Oregon: Department of Fish and Wildlife; Pacific Fishery Management Council; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Marine Fisheries Service; Department of Commerce.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: State, Justice, Commerce and Judiciary Subcommittee; House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House Committee on Appropriations. Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation; Rep. Les AuCoin; Rep. Neal Smith

Authority: Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801)

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Oregon Production Index (OPI), a method of predicting the size of the coho salmon population in a specified area, and assessed the validity of establishing fishing seasons and quotas based on the OPI.

Findings/Conclusions: In 1977, because of numerous reasons such as overfishing, degradation of the coho's environment, and environmental fluctuations, the coho salmon population decreased dramatically and remained low for the following 6 years. GAO found that, regardless of the major reason for the decline, the solution to increasing the coho population does not lie in improving the OPI. The GAO analysis, which is supported by independent studies conducted by fishery biologists, indicates that the OPI is a biologically sound concept upon which to set fishing quotas and seasons. The OPI ranks highest among the indicators used by the Northwest salmon fisheries in accurately predicting the size of the coming year's population. However, GAO feels that the OPI can be improved through additional information gathering and coordination with the fishery agencies of neighboring States. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has recently requested and received State funds for this purpose. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Commerce should request the Pacific Fishery Management Council to obtain more accurate estimates of Oregon coastal wild stock abundance through stream surveys or other counting techniques. The Secretary of Commerce should request the Pacific Fishery Management Council to gather additional data on the source and distribution of coho stocks in the OPI area through tagging, scale analysis, or other appropriate methods.

122239

Irrigation Assistance to Developing Countries Should Require Stronger Commitments to Operation and Maintenance. NSIAD-83-31; B-206848. August 29, 1983. 42 pp. plus 2 appendices (6 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Bill W. Thurman, (for Frank C. Conahan, Director), GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency of U.S. Efforts To Alleviate Food Problems in Developing Countries (1734).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Republic of Indonesia; Republic of Sri Lanka; Kingdom of Thailand; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Asian Development Bank.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1974. P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the operation and maintenance of U.S.-financed irrigation systems in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand to determine how the Agency for International Development (AID) can: (1) improve operation and maintenance

practices of developing countries and extend the economic life of the irrigation systems; and (2) design irrigation systems that adequately consider operation and maintenance requirements. *Findings/Conclusions:* GAO found that donors have demonstrated their concern with developing country food problems by investing in irrigation systems and other facilities. At the same time, they have not given sufficient attention to the complementary institutional and financial costs of operating and maintaining the facilities. Donors have assumed that recipient countries would provide recurrent budget support to effectively operate and maintain projects, but this has not happened. AID has prepared a policy on recurrent cost financing, but the World Bank and Asian Development Bank have not. GAO believes that institutional as well as financial weaknesses affect the recipient countries' ability to effectively use and maintain irrigation systems and found that many systems do not provide reliable water sources and have not become self-sustaining. GAO found that AID project designs have assumed that water user associations would be established to provide on-farm maintenance, ensure equitable water distribution, and maintain discipline among users. Generally, these assumptions have not been realized. Consequently, systems have been vandalized, water wasted or stolen, and routine maintenance ignored. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Administrator of AID should: (1) as an integral part of project planning and as a condition for project approval, require that recurrent cost plans be developed in conjunction with recipient governments and other donors to recognize the principle of cost recovery from all beneficiaries, project the annual life-of-system operation and maintenance costs, identify the source of operation and maintenance funds and the funding options available to the country and the donors, include specific plans to strengthen each recipient country's capability to budget for operation and maintenance funding and to account for operation and maintenance expenditures on a project basis, and institutionalize management monitoring and evaluation of plan implementation; and (2) encourage other donors to define their recurrent cost financing options. In addition, the Administrator should encourage the multilateral development banks to further define their recurrent cost financing options as they relate to future financing of irrigation project development. The Administrator of AID should adopt stronger design and construction criteria for improving operation and maintenance performance as standard prerequisites of approval for new irrigation and rehabilitation projects. The criteria should include: (1) quality assurance measures in design and construction to ensure that local engineers and contractors take heed of technical advisors and require site visits during the design process; (2) the involvement of farmers in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation process; (3) priority consideration of operation and maintenance requirements during project design; and (4) appropriate transition between construction and operation and maintenance. The Administrator of AID should require from the host governments, before the construction of irrigation systems begin, written certifications that: (1) active, viable water user associations have been established; (2) designers have met with association members, discussed their needs and system benefits, elicited their input into on-farm system design, and stressed that the on-farm system will be theirs and that they must operate and maintain it; (3) each association has submitted a written request for the system and has agreed to the on-farm operation and maintenance; and (4) local users, to the extent possible, will be used to help construct the on-farm portions of each project.

122258

Review of the Commodity Credit Corporation's Financial Statements for the Year Ended September 30, 1981. AFMD-83-87; B-202690. September 2, 1983. 2 pp. plus 1 appendix (19 pp.).

122

Report to Congress, by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting Operations, Financial Position, and Changes in Financial Position (2802).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems: Regulatory Accounting Rules and Financial Reporting (998 6); Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: Congress

Authority: 31 U.S.C. 9105.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the statement of financial position of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) as of September 30, 1981, and the related statements of income and expense and changes in financial position for the year then ended. *Findings/Conclusions:* GAO found that the financial statements of CCC, issued November 18, 1981, did not conform with generally accepted accounting principles. As a result, significant accounting and financial reporting policy changes were made to those financial statements so that they would conform with these accounting principles. The changes relate mainly to the recognition of certain income and expenses and of an estimated liability for deficiency payments to producers. GAO was not aware of any other material changes that should be made to the statements for them to conform with accepted accounting procedures.

122265

[Request for Reconsideration of Protest Concerning Navy RFP]. B-210082.2. September 2, 1983. 3 pp.

Decision re. Contact International, Inc.; by Harry R. Van Cleave, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Contact International, Inc.; Department of the Navy: Naval Supply Systems Command: Naval Supply Center; Servrite International, Ltd.

Authority: 62 Comp. Gen. 65. B-210082 (1983). B-205263 (1982). B-196518 (1980). B-202325 (1981).

Abstract: A firm requested reconsideration of a decision in which GAO held that a Naval Supply Center request for proposals, under which the firm had been awarded a contract for the operation of a dairy products plant, was ambiguous as to whether the cost of nonfat dry milk solids was to be included in proposed prices. Since it was unclear which offerer would have been low had offerers competed on an equal basis, the contracting officer decided to recompute the option years of the protester's contract. The protester contended that the decision was erroneous for the following reasons: (1) a defective solicitation should not be resolicited unless there is evidence that offerers were prejudiced by the defect; and (2) GAO failed to consider a supplemental report. GAO found that the ambiguity in the solicitation caused offerers to compete on an unequal basis. Therefore, the record met the required showing of prejudice to provide a basis for the contracting officer's decision to resolicit the option years of the protester's contract. GAO also considered the Navy's supplemental report and held that it supported the conclusion that the amended request for proposals was ambiguous. Accordingly, the prior decision was affirmed.

122300

Africa's Agricultural Policies--A More Concerted Effort Will Be Needed If Reform Is Expected. NSIAD-83-36; B-206850. September 8, 1983. 6 pp. plus 4 appendices (25 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Efforts To Alleviate Food Problems in Developing Countries (1734); International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630)

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of State, Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations, Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Authority: P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: GAO reviewed efforts by the Agency for International Development (AID) to reform host-government agricultural policies in Sub-Saharan Africa, which have been recognized as a major cause of the current agricultural crisis in the region because agricultural producers are not provided with either appropriate incentives or suitable economic environments to make production beyond the subsistence level worthwhile. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO believes that AID preparation of a number of policy and strategy papers, development of guidelines for preparing country development strategies, and testimony before Congress fostered commendable policy reform. However, at the country level, GAO found that AID often does not have an ongoing viable program in place which recognizes the difficulties inherent in realizing policy reform and the potential long-term effort involved. Most missions have not yet fully identified and prioritized the key host-country economic policy constraints, nor have they been involved in the development of national food strategies. In addition, GAO found that further improvements are needed in AID attempts to upgrade the economic analysis capability of its mission staff. GAO found that few missions have better than minimal reform programs underway and that only half of the missions currently have programs to improve host-government analysis capability. Some missions have questioned their ability to effectively discuss policy with host-government officials. Finally, GAO found that many missions are not fully coordinating their reform efforts with other donors and other U.S. agencies or fully using concessional agricultural commodity programs to influence reform. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator, AID, should require a definitive policy reform plan from the mission in each country, including an assessment of the probability for policy reform. Each plan should recognize the difficulties in motivating the country to make needed reforms and the potential and likely long-term nature of such an effort. Such a plan should provide actions that can be taken immediately and over the longer term and actions to be pursued if the country fails to respond or to make adequate progress. The Administrator, AID, should establish appropriate incentives for rewarding missions and staffs for their efforts in: (1) effectively carrying out policy reform programs; (2) enlisting the support of other donors for a more unified donor approach to policy reform; and (3) involving the Departments of State, Treasury, and Agriculture in the AID policy reform effort by soliciting their views and input on both regionwide and country-specific AID documents generated.

122302

Monitoring and Enforcing Food Safety--An Overview of Past Studies. RCED-83-153; B-212049. September 9, 1983. 57 pp. plus 6 appendices (28 pp.).

Staff Study by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Food Bibliography

Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741), Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921); Health Programs: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1251)

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554 0), Agriculture (350 0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service; Food and Drug Administration.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.), Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) Egg Products Inspection Law. Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 201 et seq.). Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.). Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.). H.R. 2691 (98th Cong.). H.R. 5491 (97th Cong.) H.R. 6062 (97th Cong.). S. 2348 (97th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO conducted a study which provided an overview of food safety regulation problems and cataloged major Federal food safety programs and their costs. In addition, past recommendations for statutory, organizational, and administrative changes were discussed as well as any changes that resulted and issues that remain to be addressed. **Findings/Conclusions:** The major Federal agencies involved in regulating food safety estimated that food safety programs would cost approximately \$436 million and 12,500 staff years in fiscal year (FY) 1982. However, real dollars devoted to food safety programs have declined between FY's 1977 and 1982. Federal food safety regulation is often duplicative and sometimes contradictory, costly, and unduly complex. Changes suggested by past study groups have included consolidating programs in one agency, amending food regulation statutes to make them consistent and to increase agency authority, and increasing the use of interagency agreements and standing interagency coordinating committees. To date, organizational or legislative changes responding to study recommendations have not been made, although the agencies have taken some steps to address specific problems. GAO found that many agencies did not: (1) have sufficient data to identify their regulatory scope or critical problem areas requiring attention; (2) manage agency staff efficiently and effectively; (3) investigate violators' corrective action effectively; or (4) have criteria to guide decisions about proceeding with enforcement against violators. Agency efforts to improve food regulation have also been constrained by scientific considerations.

122312

Investigation Into Legality of Commodity Credit Corporation Loan Guarantee Payments. B-208610. September 1, 1983. 14 pp.

Letter to Sen. John P. East, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Separation of Powers Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.; Polish People's Republic.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Separation of Powers Subcommittee; Sen. John P. East.

Authority: Soil Bank Act. Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1983 (P.L. 97-370). Urgent Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1982 (P.L. 97-216). 7 C.F.R. 1487. 7 C.F.R. 1493. 36 Comp. Gen. 507. 37 Comp. Gen. 820. 53 Comp. Gen. 364. Executive Order 12390. 47

Fed. Reg. 47799. *Federal Crop Insurance Corp. v. Merrill*, 322 U.S. 380 (1947). *United States v. Nixon*, 718 U.S. 683 (1974). *American Farm Lines v. Black Ball Freight Service*, 397 U.S. 532 (1970). *Sun Oil Co. v. Federal Power Commission*, 256 F.2d 233 (5th Cir. 1958). B-181432 (1976) B-188741 (1978) B-200103 (1981). B-205154 (1982). 3 U.S.C. 301 et seq. 15 U.S.C. 714 et seq. 22 U.S.C. 2656.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO investigated the legality of certain loan guarantee payments made by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to various U.S. banks which financed exports of domestic agricultural commodities to Poland. The payments in question were made pursuant to offers made by CCC to repurchase its guarantee obligations to certain holders in return for an assignment of the debt covered by those obligations. According to their terms, the offers exempted the holders from compliance with certain procedural prerequisites to reimbursement provided for in the regulations governing two CCC export guarantee programs. It was asked whether: (1) the provisions of the offers violated CCC regulations; (2) any of the resulting payments were therefore illegal; (3) the agreements adequately protect the Government's right to subrogation, and (4) the President's power under the Urgent Supplemental Appropriation Act of 1982 may be delegated. GAO did not believe that the offers and the resulting payments by CCC to the banks that accepted those offers were legally improper. GAO found that the terms of the offers and the actual procedures followed by CCC and the Government with respect to the matter of subrogation were fully consistent with all applicable statutes and regulations and fully protected the Government's legal interests. Finally, GAO concluded that the President's power under the Urgent Supplemental Appropriation Act may properly be delegated to the Secretary of State.

122367

[Operation of USDA's Special Dairy Distribution Program in Nashville, TN]. RCED-83-239; B-206763. September 14, 1983. 3 pp plus 1 enclosure (7 pp.).

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Alternate Mechanisms To Provide Food to Low Income Target Populations (1746).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO described the results of its review of the operation of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) special dairy distribution program in Nashville, Tennessee. **Findings/Conclusions:** Subsequent to a newspaper report that large quantities of Government-owned dairy products were being stored in local warehouses, the Mayor of Nashville requested surplus butter and cheese for a monthly distribution that the city had scheduled. Although the USDA Regional Administrator advised the Mayor that butter and cheese would be made available prior to the date requested, there was confusion and conflicting information about the availability of uncommitted products in a warehouse and the length of time it would take to fulfill the Mayor's request. At the time of the Mayor's request, Nashville was not approved by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) as a food bank, a prerequisite for ordering dairy products. Because the city had received dairy products very rapidly in a previous case, city officials were misled into believing that all requests for dairy products could be filled as quickly.

FNS officials had mistakenly advised city and State officials that no products were readily available when they actually were available. In addition, city officials did not realize the amount of time required to locate the most appropriate products and arrange for their transportation to the requester. Therefore, although Nashville received cheese and butter in time for its scheduled distribution, city officials were concerned about the management of the special distribution program.

122439

Delays in EPA's Regulation of Hazardous Air Pollutants. RCED-83-199; B-211085. August 26, 1983. Released September 20, 1983. 45 pp. plus 1 appendix (8 pp.).

Report to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to Testimony, November 7, 1983, Accession Number 122773.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of the Clean Air Act and the Effect of Changes to the Act (2224).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Environmental Protection Agency: Science Advisory Board.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; Rep. John D. Dingell.

Authority: Clean Air Act. Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970. *New York State v. Gorsuch*, Civ. No. NY-81-3151 (1983). *Lead Industries Inc. v. EPA*, 647 F.2d 1130 (D.C. Cir. 1980). *Union Electric Co. v. EPA*, 427 U.S. 248 (1976). *TVA v. Hill*, 437 U.S. 153 (1978).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a list of 37 substances which are subject to review as hazardous air pollutants; (2) the procedures and practices followed by EPA in preparing health assessment documents; (3) Science Advisory Board (SAB) involvement in the hazardous air pollutant program; and (4) EPA progress in establishing standards. **Findings/Conclusions:** EPA developed a list of 43 potentially hazardous air pollutants based on a contractor study. This list was refined to 37 by adding 2 substances and removing several substances that were found to break down in the atmosphere or were produced in low volume. In 1981, EPA began developing a new procedure to allow it to more accurately screen and rank potentially hazardous air pollutants. EPA is also examining four other potentially hazardous substances and is considering analyzing others not on the original list. Because industry resistance to regulation is so intense, EPA believes that it must develop the best possible health case to avoid legal action. Therefore, EPA utilizes contractors and in-house experts to review and assess the health effects of each substance and to draft health assessment documents. SAB has disagreed with EPA over the sufficiency of data needed to show adverse health effects, and policy shifts since 1978 have caused additional delays concerning the type of information to be included in these documents. The resulting delays have increased the cost of health assessments and have delayed regulatory action on several substances. EPA will not make a regulatory decision on a pollutant until SAB has reviewed and approved the health assessment, which can involve returning to SAB several times for approval. Because the process takes about 2 years, EPA has been unable to meet the 180-day deadlines for proposing standards. In addition, EPA has failed to review three of the four hazardous substances with established standards within the mandated time period.

122484

How the Content of the Agricultural and Economic Censuses Is Determined and Used. IMTEC-83-4; B-207508. September 2, 1983. Released October 3, 1983. 5 pp. plus 2 appendices (20 pp.).

Report to Rep. Katie Hall, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; by Warren G. Reed, Director, GAO Information Management and Technology Division

Issue Area: Information Management: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Efforts To Obtain Population Data (4210)

Contact: Information Management and Technology Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Other General Government (806 0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census; Department of Agriculture; Department of Commerce.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; Rep. Katie Hall.

Authority: Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-511). 13 U.S.C. 131. 13 U.S.C. 142

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the 1982 agricultural and economic censuses, focusing on how the Bureau of the Census determines their content and how the data are actually used. The law specifies that every 5 years certain activities, such as agriculture and manufacturing, be covered by these censuses. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, due to the large volume of data and the variety of data users involved, the Bureau did not attempt to formally verify the need for data. However, it did attempt to design the census questionnaires to enable it to collect accurate and useful data by: (1) reviewing the results of prior censuses to determine questions that elicited incomplete or insignificant responses; (2) soliciting comments from a broad range of data users; and (3) submitting questionnaires for external reviews. These various procedures resulted in few major changes to the questionnaires. GAO found that, for the many Federal and non-Federal organizations that use the data, the economic censuses provide: an integrated data base for computing and adjusting major Government economic indicators; input for designing economic and statistical surveys; and a basis for developing marketing strategies in the private sector. The agricultural census is used by Federal and State agencies and the private sector to analyze long-term trends and local area data and contains the only published, consistent county level data. The Department of Agriculture's Statistical Reporting Service, the provider of the most current agricultural information, bases many of its economic indicators and publications on the agricultural census data.

122523

Interim Report on Inspection, Enforcement, and Permitting Activities at Hazardous Waste Facilities. RCED-83-241; B-212808. September 21, 1983. Released October 5, 1983. 4 pp. plus 6 appendices (19 pp.).

Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to Testimony, November 16, 1983, Accession Number 122839.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Federal and State Programs in Reducing the Environmental and Health Dangers Posed by Hazardous and Solid Wastes (2221).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0)

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Rep. James J. Florio.

Authority: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Federal regulatory program for hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, focusing on ground water monitoring, inspection and enforcement activities, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permitting program for hazardous waste facilities. GAO performed this work in four States, all of which had primary inspection responsibility under interim authorization from EPA. **Findings/Conclusions:** Under Federal regulations, about 1,350 hazardous waste management facilities must institute ground water monitoring programs. GAO found that 78 percent of the facilities in two of the States visited were not in compliance with Federal regulations. The other States did not know the extent of noncompliance in their States because they had not inspected most of their facilities for compliance. EPA has concluded that there has been considerable noncompliance with monitoring standards nationwide. Federal regulations also require that waste facility operators demonstrate their ability to finance closure and postclosure activities when the facility ceases operations. GAO found that none of the States visited require their inspectors to routinely evaluate the adequacy of closure and postclosure plans. EPA has concluded that most such plans are inadequate, although the extent of noncompliance nationwide is unknown. GAO found that, while EPA and State inspections and facilities may have improved, enforcement efforts aimed at hazardous waste facilities have not been extensive. In addition, GAO reported that final permits have been issued to only 24 of the estimated 8,000 hazardous waste facilities expected to require such permits. GAO contends that final permitting is important because facilities with interim status need not comply with all the technical and design standards that EPA believes necessary to protect human health and the environment. Because so few permits have been issued, GAO believes that it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the EPA permitting process.

122524

Improvements Needed in Clinical Testing of Anticancer Drugs. HRD-83-52; B-212322. September 26, 1983. Released October 4, 1983. 48 pp. plus 2 appendices (11 pp.).

Report to Sen. Paula Hawkins; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to Testimony, June 30, 1983, Accession Number 121728.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection; Evaluation of Drug Safety and Efficacy Prior to Marketing (0907); Health Programs: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (1251).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Health Research (552.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; National Institutes of Health: National Cancer Institute; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education

Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Sen Paula Hawkins.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). 21 C.F.R. 50. 21 C.F.R. 50.25. 21 C.F.R. 50.27 21 C.F.R. 56.111(a)(2) 21 C.F.R. 312.1(a) 42 Fed. Reg. 49612

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the clinical testing of anticancer drugs and the regulation of that testing by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine: (1) how well, during its review of new anticancer drug applications, FDA discharges its responsibility to protect human test subjects, (2) the manner in which drug sponsors and institutional review boards carry out their responsibilities; and (3) whether there is therapeutic intent during testing of anticancer drugs. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that FDA and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) have made some improvements to better ensure that patients involved in clinical testing of anticancer drugs are protected. These improvements include: (1) more monitoring of investigators who perform the clinical studies for the sponsors; (2) improved reporting of adverse drug reactions (ADR); and (3) increased controls over investigational new drug (IND) supplies. However, GAO believes that additional actions are needed. Delays by FDA reviewers in completing written reports on deficiencies resulted in FDA sending deficiency letters to sponsors 2 to 5 months after an application was received. GAO found instances where FDA was notified that its recommendations were not implemented because of a lack of a reporting system. Also, sponsors do not always submit amendments to FDA for review and, when they are submitted, FDA frequently does not review them or does not review them in a timely manner. GAO found 12 protocols involving five drugs that had not been submitted to FDA for review. FDA regulations are not specific regarding: (1) the definition of ADR; and (2) the timeframes during which these reactions should be reported to FDA. In addition, it is difficult to determine in many instances whether a change in a patient's condition was caused by the IND or by some other factor. Finally, GAO found that NCI does not require monitoring visits, but plans to expand the number of investigators visited. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Commissioner of FDA to give sponsors and clinical investigators more precise guidance as to what types of reactions they should report as ADR and when they should report possible ADR in cases in which the reaction's relationship to the drug is uncertain. This should include specific timeframes for reporting ADR to FDA. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Commissioner of FDA to urge sponsors, if they have not already done so, to establish definite timeframes for clinical investigator reporting of ADR which will allow the sponsors time to meet FDA reporting requirements. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should instruct sponsors to label or otherwise highlight ADR forms or mailing envelopes to ensure that ADR's will be recognized and dealt with immediately upon their arrival at FDA. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Director of NCI to revise the need for and usefulness of its drug study data base. If needed, NCI should require clinical investigators to submit data in a more timely and complete manner. If not needed, NCI should terminate the effort. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Director of NCI to ensure that NCI site visit monitoring includes all NCI investigators; devise a procedure to verify investigators' drug disbursements to their satellite locations or require that drug shipments be made directly to these locations by NCI; and if possible within allocated resources, increase the frequency of site visits to monitor investigators' performances. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Commissioner of FDA to: (1) issue final sponsor-monitoring regulations; and (2) establish specific requirements for information to be included in progress reports submitted by sponsors of drug studies. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Com-

missioner of FDA to require that IND reviewers document for the record, within 30 days of the date an IND is submitted to FDA for initial review, that they have satisfied themselves as to the safety of patients participating in tests of new anticancer drugs. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to require that IND reviewers whenever practical discuss all IND deficiencies with sponsors before clinical testing begins, or promptly after a deficiency is noted if testing has already begun, and then communicate all such deficiencies in writing to the sponsor in a timely manner. To deal with situations where this procedure is not practicable, guidance should be developed to assist FDA reviewers in determining which deficiencies are sufficiently significant to be communicated promptly to test sponsors. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to establish a formal followup system so that FDA can know whether IND sponsors respond to its recommendations to improve patient safety. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to revise its regulations to require sponsors to approve and submit for FDA review, before clinical testing begins, all clinical protocols. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to develop a system for identifying major IND amendments and promptly distributing them to reviewers. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should require the Director of NCI to advise FDA in a timely manner of actions taken or to be taken on concerns raised by FDA during its review of NCI IND applications.

122589

[Request for Views on Availability of Appropriations for African Development Fund]. B-212876. September 21, 1983. 2 pp. Letter to Margery Waxman, Deputy General Counsel, Department of the Treasury; by Harry R. Van Cleve, Acting General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Treasury.

Authority: Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1982. 60 Comp. Gen. 263. P.L. 97-377. 96 Stat. 1830. 96 Stat. 1831.

Abstract: GAO was asked for its views concerning the period of availability of the funds appropriated for the African Development Fund. GAO found that, under the applicable appropriation act, the funds for the program are to remain available until expended.

122687

Information on Disposal Practices of Generators of Small Quantities of Hazardous Wastes. RCED-83-200; B-204242. September 28, 1983. Released October 28, 1983. 3 pp. plus 11 appendices (27 pp.).

Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Federal and State Programs in Reducing the Environmental and Health Dangers Posed by Hazardous and Solid Wastes (2221).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Rep. James J. Florio

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the problems caused by the disposal of hazardous waste into solid waste landfills by small-quantity generators of such waste. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) although Federal grants for small-quantity generator waste programs were eliminated in fiscal year 1982, officials in three of the four States visited by GAO indicated that they were able to increase State funding or make other program adjustments necessary to limit the impact on their programs; (2) most States have added additional restrictions to the Federal regulations on the disposal of hazardous waste in solid waste landfills; (3) sewer disposal of hazardous waste at small-quantity generators may be a potential problem; (4) the presence of hazardous waste in solid waste landfills has resulted in few documented occupational safety or health problems being reported; and (5) two of the four States visited by GAO were experiencing ground water contamination at some of their solid waste landfills.

122693

[Oversight of State Department's Refugee Reception and Placement Program]. NSIAD-83-35; B-205494. September 30, 1983. 2 pp. plus 1 enclosure (8 pp.).

Report to Sen. Strom Thurmond, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Rep. Peter W. Rodino, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Increasing the Effectiveness of U.S. Humanitarian Assistance (0639).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State; Department of State; Bureau of Refugee Programs.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on the Judiciary; Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Rep. Peter W. Rodino, Jr.; Sen. Strom Thurmond.

Authority: Refugee Assistance Amendments of 1982.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of State's monitoring of voluntary agencies' implementation of the initial reception and placement program for resettling refugees in the United States. **Findings/Conclusions:** Over the past year, State's Bureau of Refugee Programs has: (1) requested, received, and evaluated voluntary agency program proposals for 1983; (2) strengthened operating agreements with the agencies; (3) conducted field monitoring of selected agency activities; and (4) prepared internal reports on the agencies' performance. In addition, State's Office of the Inspector General has conducted six financial audits of the resettlement activities of voluntary agencies and has plans for additional audits. The Bureau concurred with and now plans to incorporate into its procedures for future monitoring of voluntary agencies' implementation of the program previous GAO suggestions to: (1) establish standards and/or criteria to determine the acceptability of agencies' proposals for assisting refugees; (2) submit to the voluntary agencies the Bureau's monitoring reports which contain assessments of agency performance, identify problems, and recommend improvements; and (3) document voluntary agencies' proposed corrective actions.

122773

[EPA's Progress in Regulating Hazardous Air Pollutants]. November 7, 1983. 9 pp. plus 2 attachments (3 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter

Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to RCED-83-199, August 26, 1983, Accession Number 122439.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Environmental Protection Agency; Science Advisory Board.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Authority: Clean Air Act.

Abstract: Testimony was given on a GAO report on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) procedures and problems in listing and regulating hazardous air pollutants under the Clean Air Act. Since the passage of the act in 1970, EPA has identified only seven substances as hazardous air pollutants and has established emission standards for only four of them. GAO found that various policy shifts and uncertainty over the type and amount of scientific data needed to support regulatory action were contributing factors to delays in identification and regulation. EPA has identified 37 potentially hazardous air pollutants and plans to conduct exposure and health assessments on them to determine which should be considered for possible regulation. GAO believes that EPA needs to direct its efforts toward the most potentially hazardous chemicals and develop a plan to conduct assessments in accordance with substances' priority ranking. GAO also found that the EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) review procedure delays health assessment documents. SAB and EPA have disagreed over the sufficiency of data and the best method to characterize a substance's potential adverse health effects. GAO believes that EPA and SAB need to review the current process and reach a mutual agreement on ways to accelerate the review process and the closure of health assessment documents. Further, GAO found that there have been significant delays in setting standards after SAB review. Finally, GAO found that, when establishing standards, EPA has considered economic and technological factors in adopting a regulatory control strategy as well as considering health risks. GAO believes that Congress intended that EPA establish standards to eliminate public health risks and did not intend economic factors or technological feasibility to be relevant considerations in setting standards.

122817

USDA's Oversight of State Meat and Poultry Inspection Programs Could Be Strengthened. RCED-84-23; B-213113. October 21, 1983. Released November 15, 1983. 35 pp. plus 3 appendices (6 pp.).

Report to Sen. Lawton Chiles; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Food Quality Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741); Consumer and Worker Protection: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0951).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture; Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations;

Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Governmental Efficiency and the District of Columbia Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Sen Thomas F. Eagleton; Sen Lawton Chiles.

Authority: Meat Inspection Act. Poultry Products Inspection Act. Wholesome Meat Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Wholesome Poultry Products Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.). H.R. 1795 (98th Cong.). S 593 (98th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) oversight of state meat and poultry inspection programs to determine whether USDA certification procedures conform to the authorizing legislation and to evaluate the methods used in special USDA internal review studies of state inspection effectiveness. In addition, GAO summarized the results of USDA ratings of state-inspected plants to identify trends and the relative standings of state programs from 1980 through 1982. **Findings/Conclusions:** Federal legislation gives USDA discretion in determining whether state programs are equal to the federal program. GAO believes that the USDA certification procedures are reasonable and consistent with legislative requirements. However, GAO identified several ways of making the certification procedures more effective. The Food Safety and Inspection Service has proposed substantial changes to its state program review guidelines which, if implemented, would establish a specific policy regarding frequency and scope of state-inspected plant followup visits. However, GAO believes that other proposed changes would strengthen federal evaluations of state programs. The basic methods used in an Inspection Service internal review to determine how state-inspected review results compared with the results of federally inspected plant review results were sound, but GAO could not determine whether the results were valid. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to include this area in all regular reviews of circuit operations made by the review and evaluation staff. The Administrator likewise should include this area in similar reviews of regional operations should such reviews be implemented on a regular basis in the future. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to eliminate, or substantially reduce, the influence of custom/exempt plant reviews on state program ratings. This should be done by either basing ratings solely on reviews of official state-inspected plants or, if the Secretary deems it more appropriate, making revisions to the present rating system. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to include uncorrected items found during followup visits at state-inspected plants with unacceptable items when computing state ratings. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to implement proposed policy changes that would specify the number of times a state-inspected plant with unacceptable items should be revisited and the number of basic inspection items that should be covered. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to use comparisons of state and federal plant deficiency rates when certifying state programs. This should be done by using the comparisons either as a general factor considered in reaching an overall judgment on a state's program or by using the federal rate as a basis for periodically adjusting the ranges of unacceptable item percentages now used to rate state inspection efforts. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to emphasize to circuit supervisors the importance of accurately reporting federal plant review results and require that area supervisors place special emphasis on this area during their normal oversight of circuit supervisor performance.

122839

[EPA and State Inspection, Enforcement, and Permitting Activities at Hazardous Waste Facilities]. November 16, 1983. 7 pp. **Testimony** before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-83-241, September 21, 1983, Accession Number 122523.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee.

Authority: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976.

Abstract: Testimony was presented concerning a GAO report on inspection, enforcement, and permitting activities at hazardous waste facilities. GAO found that many facilities are not complying with Federal regulations requiring the owners and operators of certain hazardous waste facilities to institute ground water monitoring programs or document their eligibility to waive monitoring requirements. Two primary reasons for noncompliance are the technical complexity surrounding the proper location and construction of wells and the high costs of installing them. To improve the situation, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has made facilities subject to ground water monitoring requirements a high inspection priority for 1984. Federal regulations also require owners and operators of hazardous waste facilities to demonstrate their ability to finance closure and postclosure activities when the facilities cease operations. GAO found that the States it reviewed did not routinely perform detailed evaluations of facility closure plans and cost estimates and could not evaluate the adequacy of their financial assurance instruments. Since it has been reported that facility closure plans are inadequate, EPA has also made the review of facility closure plans and cost estimates a high priority for fiscal year 1984 and plans to provide additional training guidance in plan evaluation and cost estimation. GAO found that, through October 1983, only 80 of the estimated 8,000 facilities required to have permits had received final permits, and EPA estimates that permitting of all facilities could extend to 1993. Due to the long period of time involved, EPA has established priorities for permitting, giving land disposal facilities top priority and storage and treatment facilities the lowest priority.

122841

[Long-Term Care]. November 3, 1983. 10 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Finance: Health Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Finance: Health Subcommittee.

Abstract: Testimony was presented on GAO work in long-term health care. There is currently no coordinated national policy that promotes both adequate and efficient long-term care services for the elderly and disabled. When the elderly and their families look for long-term care services they are likely to find that: (1) there is a lack of information about available services; (2) community services essential to remaining at home may not exist; (3) there is often a lack of coordination among public and private community service providers; (4) eligibility for services varies across institutions and across States; and (5) professionals may recommend nursing home placement because they do not have the expertise or time to arrange for community care. Because community-based, long-term care is often expensive, the elderly often choose nursing home care subsidized by Medicaid. GAO

has found that, by liberalizing eligibility and the coverage of services to ensure the expansion of community-based home health care, the Government would increase the longevity and improve the quality of life of the elderly. However, expansion of home health care may not reduce overall health care costs. Since community-based, long-term care services will continue to grow, attention must be given to developing efficient means of providing these services. GAO studies have found that basic program data on long-term care services are inadequate. GAO believes that the analysis of long-term care experiments should focus on the development of data on: the characteristics of the persons who are most in need of long-term care; the types of services that should be provided; who should be the providers; the method of payment that will provide services most efficiently; and the mechanisms that will allow the maximum support from family and friends.

122845

[New or Renovated Warehouse Space Provided Under Extended Storage Agreements]. RCED-84-49; B-206023. October 14, 1983. 4 pp.

Report to Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations; Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Marketing Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations; Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. Glenn L. English.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO obtained information on the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) extended storage program, which is designed to provide long-term storage space for CCC commodities at reasonable rates. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO reviewed 40 of 252 warehouses that had agreed to provide such space. The additional storage space which had been contracted for had been provided by 39 of the 40 warehouses. Of these, 14 were selected for visitation and verification that the new or renovated space was built. GAO verified that the warehouses had complied with their agreements and stated that these findings were representative of those warehouses throughout the country that had agreed to construct new space or renovate existing space.

122851

Federal Agricultural Research Funding: Issues and Concerns. RCED-84-20; B-213112. October 20, 1983. 20 pp. plus 12 appendices (20 pp.).

Report to Sen. Richard G. Lugar, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Research and General Legislation Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Efficient Stimulation of Agricultural Research and Development (1735); Science and Technology: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (2051).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service; Department of Agriculture: Cooperative State Research Service.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Research and General Legislation Subcommittee; Sen. Richard G. Lugar.

Authority: Morrill Act (Agricultural Colleges). Organic Act of 1862 (12 Stat. 387). Hatch Act (Agricultural Experiment Stations) (7 U.S.C. 361 et seq.). Research and Marketing Act (7 U.S.C. 427 et seq.). Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act (National) (P.L. 95-113). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (7 U.S.C. 1281). Special Research Grants Act (P.L. 89-106).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO studied the regional distribution of Federal agricultural research funds administered through the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and obtained the views of State and Federal research leaders on agricultural research funding issues. The U.S. food and agricultural research system encompasses: (1) the USDA Agricultural Research Service; (2) the State agricultural experiment stations which are part of land-grant universities; and (3) the food and fiber industry. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) both regional distribution of Federal agricultural research funds and funding by the States varied widely depending on the specific research program; (2) interviews with officials at 14 land-grant universities indicated that both Federal formula and competitive grant funds for their research programs were favorably received, and any changes in formula allocation would generally be opposed.

122865

Medicaid and Nursing Home Care: Cost Increases and the Need for Services Are Creating Problems for the States and the Elderly IPE-84-1; B-213126. October 21, 1983. 132 pp. plus 13 appendices (40 pp.).

Report to Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelmsky, Director, GAO Institute for Program Evaluation.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Development of Relevant, Decision-Oriented Methodological Strategies (2611).

Contact: Institute for Program Evaluation.

Budget Function: Health: Nursing Homes (551.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Henry A. Waxman.

Authority: Social Security Amendments of 1972 (P.L. 92-603). Social Security Amendments of 1983 (P.L. 98-21). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-499).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO assessed Medicaid's nursing home services nationwide to provide information on the characteristics of nursing home residents, program expenditures, nursing home bed supply, and Medicaid reimbursement policies. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that most nursing home residents are functionally dependent or mentally impaired and often stay very long in the nursing homes. Residents with long stays are more likely to be unmarried women with mental illness who are supported by Medicaid. There are indications that the at-risk population will grow as well as the care needs for the elderly who enter nursing homes. Medicaid expenditures for nursing home care have increased at a high rate

and all States have problems financing this program. However, the amount they spend for this service varies substantially, and Federal medical assistance, while increasing spending for nursing home services in some poorer States, does not equalize expenditures across States. States reimburse nursing homes through the Medicaid program in many different ways and, across the States, the range of reimbursement rates for similar services is very wide, making cost comparisons difficult. Because most State reimbursement systems are not designed to pay the total cost of care, there is an economic incentive for nursing homes not to admit patients for whom care costs will be high. States vary widely in their ratio of nursing home beds available to elderly population. However, the rate of increase in bed supplies decreased between 1976 and 1980. There are indications of an inadequate supply of beds in the lowest-bed States and an overuse of nursing home services in the highest-bed States. Recent legislative changes to place Medicare patients in scarce nursing home beds may increase problems in Medicaid patients' access to care.

122891

Improved Management of Productive Credit Guaranty Program Can Minimize U.S. Risk Exposure and Costs. NSIAD-84-3; B-207814. November 28, 1983. 5 pp plus 1 appendix (14 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development, by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Better Management of Programs Designed To Increase Private Sector Involvement in Development (0640).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Jamaica; Republic of Paraguay; Republic of Bolivia; Republic of Costa Rica; Republic of Nicaragua; Agency for International Development: Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean; Agency for International Development: Bureau for Private Enterprise.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1974.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Productive Credit Guaranty Program (PCGP) through which the Agency for International Development (AID) provides partial guarantees to private credit institutions in recipient countries to encourage lending to organized groups and individuals in carrying out credit and self-help community development projects. **Findings/Conclusions:** Since 1981, PCGP has been at a virtual standstill in Paraguay, Bolivia, and Costa Rica due to economic recessions and problems with in-country banks and AID management. PCGP was terminated in Paraguay in 1983 and in Nicaragua in 1982, and the Costa Rica PCGP is being incorporated into a new program. Severe economic recessions contributed to declines in loan activity, high interest rates, greater arrearages, and restrictions on the money supply. Because the primary function of the central banks is currency regulation, they had little time or interest in PCGP's which contributed to poor program monitoring, control, evaluations, recordkeeping, and reporting. Because of poor reports management, AID financial liability is unclear. In 1982, all new program authority shifted from the Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to the Bureau for Private Enterprise (PRE) and, in 1983, PRE signed its first project agreement with Jamaica. In addition, PRE eliminated participation by central banks and technical assistants and will deal directly with the lender. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The AID Administrator should determine whether a financial audit is needed to

determine AID liability in the recipient countries, examine the recoupments made, assess whether the guaranty funds have been adequately protected, and ensure that any future claims are valid. The AID Administrator should improve coordination between LAC and PRE so that PRE can benefit from LAC experience and determine the authority it has remaining under the program. The AID Administrator should consolidate PCGP in one bureau by transferring all existing program authority to PRE. The AID Administrator should seek to amend the Jamaica agreement to: (1) limit the percentage of loans that can be discounted through public institutions; (2) increase that portion of the reserve fund reserved to pay the AID share of the guaranty; (3) collect a fee on each guaranty, to be deposited in a revolving fund of the U.S. Treasury as specified in sections 223(a) and (b) of the Foreign Assistance Act; (4) require that PRE, in conjunction with the Royal Bank Jamaica Limited, prepare a detailed reporting format to include an accounting of the reserve fund, technical assistance provided, collateral held, interest earned, recoupments, and other data deemed necessary to fully monitor the program; and (5) specify a more active role for the mission in program monitoring. PRE should consider these points in drawing up any future agreements with the recipient countries. The AID Administrator should direct that PRE establish quantifiable indicators to measure success. The AID Administrator should direct that the Jamaica project be evaluated after 1 year of issuing guarantees to determine whether AID should continue the program or terminate it.

122959

Agriculture's Soil Conservation Programs Miss Full Potential in the Fight Against Soil Erosion. RCED-84-48; B-212890. November 28, 1983. 58 pp. plus 6 appendices (21 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Refer to CED-77-30, February 14, 1977, Accession Number 100007.

Issue Area: Land Use Planning and Control: Effectiveness of Programs Designed To Promote and Regulate the Development, Rehabilitation, and Conservation of Nonpublic Lands and Related Resources (2314).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0); Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Soil Conservation Service; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Soil and Water Conservation Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. 16 U.S.C. 590a et seq.

Abstract: GAO reported on those aspects of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) three major conservation programs which deal with soil erosion, including: (1) the seriousness of soil erosion; (2) USDA bases for allocating resources to, and measuring the results of, the programs; (3) possible changes that could improve the program's effectiveness; and (4) USDA followup on previous report recommendations. **Findings/Conclusions:** USDA has estimated that about 6.5 billion tons of soil erode annually and that conservation programs are not keeping up with the problem. Data are not presently available to give a clear estimate

of the consequences and costs of erosion or to enable allocations of resources to be made in such a way that federal conservation programs obtain the greatest benefit for the resources spent. USDA decisions for allocating resources to combat soil erosion have generally not been predicated on factors directly linked to minimizing erosion's harmful effects. USDA plans to modify its resource allocation approaches to base judgments on erosion abatement needs on the extent of soil displacement. It may be some time before USDA is able to obtain the optimum data needed on erosion's harmful effects and to allocate soil conservation resources on that basis. However, some improvements for more effective use of resources at local levels are possible in the near term. GAO found that some disagreement exists as to whether soil erosion could be substantially reduced through more widespread use of conservation tillage farming methods. Finally, GAO questioned the purposes of USDA cost sharing of conservation practices in certain situations, but found that USDA policy has been changed in this area to meet the specifications of a previous GAO report.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to reassess its research needs priorities regarding the relative position of soil conservation research within its overall research program as well as erosion/productivity research within the soil conservation program. Such a reassessment should: (1) ensure that allocated resources sufficiently address the severity of erosion's threat to the Nation's long-term cropland and productivity; (2) consider and clearly describe how the ARS program will address the erosion/productivity research needs described in the SCS January 1983 research needs report; and (3) address the need to resolve the issue concerning the degree to which various kinds of soils can tolerate erosion before degradation occurs. The Secretary of Agriculture should establish a policy that will: (1) recognize that the USDA primary soil conservation objective is to reduce erosion's harmful effects as opposed to simply achieving reductions in soil displacement, and (2) require USDA agencies to allocate conservation funds according to a prioritization of erosion's harmful effects at the earliest possible time. Similar approaches would need to be followed in the allocation and use of conservation funds at State and local levels. The Secretary of Agriculture should require that ASCS provide local ASCS committees with CRES generated cost/benefit data, statistically significant at the local level, for all approved soil conservation cost-sharing practices as soon as these data become available and require that these data be used as a basis for future decisions on providing ASCS conservation assistance. The Secretary of Agriculture should require that SCS test the feasibility of variable-rate cost sharing for its Great Plains Conservation Program. The Secretary of Agriculture should require that SCS include in its report to the local ASCS committee, where applicable, a list of alternative practices that could effectively address an applicant's erosion problem. The Secretary of Agriculture should expand the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) variable-rate cost-share pilot project as quickly as practicable to (1) obtain a representative sample of all counties where the Universal Soil Loss and Wind Erosion Equations' formulas can be used; (2) expand the variable-rate concept programwide if test results are favorable; and (3) reorient resource allocation at the local level using CRES cost effectiveness as the short-term criterion and reductions in erosion's harmful effects as the long-term criterion. The Secretary of Agriculture should reassess research priorities concerning conservation tillage to ensure that allocated resources sufficiently address the needs identified in the January 1983 Soil Conservation Service (SCS) research needs report. The Secretary of Agriculture should revise Conservation Reporting and Evaluation System (CRES) data analysis procedures to ensure that the combined soil erosion reduction benefits of several conservation practices are not attributed to a single practice when conservation practice cost/benefit tables are

developed. The Secretary of Agriculture should require that specific and detailed guidance, coupled with assistance approval certifications, be established and used at all state and local levels. This guidance should ensure that the Government does not cost share practices primarily used to enhance production or defray costs that are, or should be, part of normal farming or ranching operations, rather than to provide enduring conservation benefits.

122982

Status of Air Force Efforts To Deal With Groundwater Contamination Problems at McClellan Air Force Base. NSIAD-84-37, B-213706 November 29, 1983. 42 pp
Report to Rep. Vic Fazio; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Facilities and Material Management. Effectiveness of Federal Agencies in Operating and Maintaining Their Facilities (0725), Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Federal and State Programs in Reducing the Environmental and Health Dangers Posed by Hazardous and Solid Wastes (2221).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0); National Defense. Department of Defense - Military (Except Procurement and Contracting) (051.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Environmental Protection Agency; Department of the Air Force, Department of the Air Force; McClellan AFB, CA.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Vic Fazio.

Authority: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601). Executive Order 12316. A.F.R. 161-44.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed Air Force efforts relating to groundwater contamination at McClellan Air Force Base, focusing on: (1) the adequacy of a technical report that was to determine the extent of groundwater contamination and suggest solutions; (2) Air Force procedures for releasing contamination data and reports to the public; (3) Air Force actions to improve its program for resolving pollution problems; and (4) procedures for ensuring safe drinking water. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the technical report was supposed to determine the extent of groundwater contamination at McClellan and recommend actions to mitigate adverse environmental effects, restore the local environment to normality, and provide for future environmental monitoring. The contractor that performed the report concluded from the data collected that cleanup measures would be either ineffective or too costly. The Environmental Protection Agency and State and local regulatory agencies indicated that: (1) the study did not determine the amount and type of hazardous wastes at various disposal sites on the base; (2) off-base data were needed to completely identify the magnitude of contamination in the area; (3) the study may not have determined the rate and direction of contaminant movement; and (4) some of the monitoring and sampling procedures used in the study were questionable. GAO found that State and local efforts to deal with groundwater contamination in the McClellan area have been hampered by a lack of information from and coordination with Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies, but that the situation has been improved by several recent Air Force actions designed to: (1) clarify responsibility for off-base actions; (2) reduce delays in the release of data to concerned groups outside the Air Force; and (3) improve coordination with regulatory agencies. GAO also found that, while McClellan has reduced contamination levels substantially since the problem was discovered, more work is necessary to ensure acceptable water quality.

122983

[Department of Agriculture's Payment-In-Kind Program]. November 3, 1983. 23 pp. plus 5 appendices (26 pp.).

Testimony before the House Committee on Ways and Means: Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means. Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, testimony was given concerning the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Payment-In-Kind (PIK) Program for 1983. Since 1980, record harvests and decreased domestic and foreign demand have resulted in low commodity prices, decreased farm incomes, and a large buildup of Government-held food stocks. USDA increased its farm program payments fourfold between 1980 and 1982, and potential payments for 1983 were estimated at seven times those of 1980. Therefore, GAO was asked to estimate the cost of the 1983 PIK Program, identify farms that would receive large PIK payments, and review the reasonableness of the USDA estimated budget savings attributable to the program. The 1983 PIK Program will cost between \$10 and \$11 billion. However, final cost data will not be available until after March 1984. In a survey of large PIK payments to 708 farms in 9 States, GAO found that 35 will receive commodities valued at over \$500,000 each, including 7 farms that will receive commodities valued at more than \$2 million each. Because there will not be a 1984 PIK Program for corn and grain sorghum, USDA estimates that the 1983 and 1984 PIK Programs would result in \$14.9 billion savings in farm program outlays for the 4-year period ending in 1986 will have to be revised. Furthermore, budget savings on farm programs for a 4-year period are very difficult to project because of program changes and the uncertainties surrounding the agricultural sector. If the same set of assumptions had been used by USDA to compare the PIK Program with a non-PIK program, the savings attributable to the PIK Program would be less.

123008

Federal Agencies' Implementation of the 1983 Emergency Jobs Appropriations Act. OACG-84-1; B-205627. November 28, 1983. 3 pp. plus 3 enclosures (21 pp.).

Report to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Program and Budget Information for Congressional Use: Information and Assistance Needed by Congress for Considering and Acting Upon Reforms in Governmental Decision-making (3414).

Contact: Office of the Assistant Comptroller General.

Budget Function: Multiple Functions (999.0).

Organization Concerned: Government-Wide.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations; Sen. Mark O. Hatfield.

Authority: Emergency Jobs Appropriations Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-8).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed Federal agencies' efforts to implement title I of the 1983 Emergency Jobs Appropriations Act. **Findings/Conclusions:** The purpose of title I was to provide productive jobs for unemployed Americans and humanitarian assistance to the indigent and homeless, as well as to encourage Federal projects of lasting value. The objectives of the GAO review were to assess Federal agency progress in implementing title I of the act and identify

and assess problems agencies may have in quickly obligating the available funds. GAO found that the ability of agencies to quickly obligate title I funds is dependent upon the types of programs involved: welfare-type program funds have been obligated more quickly than construction and maintenance funds. About 89 percent of the title I funds available for obligation falls under the construction, renovation, and maintenance category and about 43 percent of the funds that had to be obligated before the end of the fiscal year (FY) had been obligated by June 30, 1983. GAO further observed that: (1) the Department of Agriculture has transferred \$300 million in funds to the Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund for the Farm Operating Loan Program, (2) the administration plans to reduce budget requests for several future FY's to offset a portion of the funds made available in 1983, (3) the President proposed deferral of \$67 million in appropriations for two construction programs, (4) since no uniform, comprehensive reporting requirements exist regarding the jobs created, accurate estimates are not available; and (5) agencies have generally allocated funds to high unemployment areas in accordance with the act's targeting provisions.

123017

[Legislation To Amend the Federal Employees Health Benefits Act]. December 1, 1983. 8 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.).

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Civil Service, Post Office and General Services Subcommittee; by Michael Zimmerman, Associate Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Civil Service, Post Office and General Services Subcommittee

Authority: Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. Federal Employees' Health Benefits Act of 1959. Social Security Amendments of 1983. S. 2027 (98th Cong.). H. R. 3798 (98th Cong.). S. 1685 (98th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO commented on three bills being considered by Congress to amend the Federal Employees Health Benefits Act. GAO noted reasons that the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program has encountered problems, including the: (1) inability to contain the spiraling costs of health care; (2) lack of predictability over budgeting for the Government's contribution toward health plan premiums; (3) attempts to keep pace with the more expensive private sector health programs; and (4) expensive premiums making the program unattractive. S. 2027 would establish a needed cost containment program which emphasizes cost effectiveness, while requiring that the Government's contribution toward health plans be based on a weighted average of the premiums charged by all participating plans. S. 1685 would require that the Government's contribution be adjusted annually by the fluctuations in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. H.R. 3798 proposes annual adjustments to the Government's contribution in an amount proportional to changes in the Gross National Product. GAO believes that these bills would contribute to solving many of the current problems facing the program. Further, the requirement for periodic Comptroller General reviews and reports on the activities of the utilization and peer review organizations should be deleted from S. 2027.

123039

[Analysis of Certain Aspects of a Corn Shipment to South Texas To Meet Obligations to Producers Under the Payment-In-Kind Program]. RCED-84-71; B-213707. December 2, 1983. Released December 9, 1983. 5 pp. plus 1 enclosure (15 pp.).

Report to Rep. E. (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture, Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture, Rep. E. (Kika) De La Garza

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed certain aspects of a corn shipment to South Texas to meet obligations to producers under the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Payment-In-Kind (PIK) Program to determine: (1) the difference in the quality of some of the corn between the time it was graded at its point of shipment and the time it was graded at its arrival point and whether the warehouse used was a problem shipper; (2) the USDA rationale for shipping the corn to the warehouse rather than to its eventual destination; (3) whether the USDA position that it was not liable for reimbursing the warehouse for costs incurred in anticipation of receiving the shipment was correct; (4) whether the USDA decision not to have the corn upgraded by the warehouse but to ship the corn to another location was correct; and (5) whether USDA normally fulfills its PIK corn obligations with low-grade corn. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that it is common for corn to drop one grade when it is shipped. However, it is not common for corn to lose up to three grades in transit, as occurred in some shipments. GAO found that the sampling procedures used were in compliance with USDA requirements. In addition, GAO did not find any evidence to support the allegation that the warehouse at the point of origin was a problem shipper. GAO found that the lower grades were due to broken corn and the presence of foreign material. USDA shipped the corn to the warehouse in question because the producers designated it as the delivery point. Because the warehouse agreed to accept the shipment, USDA was not liable for the costs which the warehouse incurred in anticipation of the shipment. Due to a misunderstanding about the warehouse's price to upgrade the corn, USDA upgraded and shipped the corn to another destination. This saved USDA about \$291,000 because it did not have to ship as much corn to that location, unloading charges were less, and the corn was not upgraded at the new destination. USDA does not fulfill its PIK obligations to producers with low-grade corn unless sufficient stocks of quality corn are not available. However, if lower grade corn has to be used, producers receive additional quantities of it to make up for the difference in value.

123042

[Cost Information on the USDA Tobacco Program]. RCED-84-33; B-205935. December 12, 1983. 13 pp.

Report to Rep. Thomas E. Petri; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture; Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Thomas E. Petri.

Authority: No Net Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-218). Agriculture Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1281 et seq.). Agriculture Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). P.L. 98-59. P.L. 98-180.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO obtained cost information on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) tobacco

price-support program. Specifically, GAO was asked to identify: (1) the costs of the tobacco program prior to passage of the No Net Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982; (2) the costs that have accrued on the 1982 flue-cured and burley crops, and (3) whether the assessment program is adequate to ensure that the program is carried out at no cost to the Government. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) tobacco loans made since 1938 have totaled about \$5 billion, of which over \$58 million have not been recovered; and (2) accrued carrying and interest costs on 1982 flue-cured and crop year burley tobacco totaled about \$168.7 million. The act requires producers to pay an assessment that is deposited into a fund to ensure that the Government sustains no net losses after the tobacco has been sold. However, since the volume of 1982 crop year tobacco coming under loan was higher than originally projected, USDA concluded that the 1982 crop assessment was inadequate. USDA estimated that additional funds are needed to recover the program's costs. GAO noted that USDA plans to collect the shortages through increased assessments on subsequent crops.

123054

[Protest of Continuous Inspection Requirement in USDA Invitation for Purchase]. B-212591. December 16, 1983. 4 pp.

Decision re: Northwest Seafoods Co.; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowers, Comptroller General)

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Northwest Seafoods Co.; Department of Agriculture

Authority: 50 C.F.R. 260. F.P.R. 1-2 407-8(b)(4) B-198679 (1981). B-201642 (1981). B-210927 (1983).

Abstract: A firm protested a requirement for continuous inspection under a Department of Agriculture (USDA) solicitation for canned fish to be procured and distributed as surplus commodities for food relief programs. The protester complained that the inspection requirement exceeded the Government's minimum needs and unduly restricted competition. USDA stated that the requirement was necessary to ensure the production and delivery of a uniform high-quality food product and a uniform quality control system. Because the solicitation provided that fish packed in 1982 would be accepted on an end-item lot inspection basis to help speed the economic recovery of the depressed industry, USDA accepted the protester's 1982 offer, but rejected its 1983 offers because the fish had not been canned in a facility approved to operate under continuous inspection. The protester contended that the continuous inspection requirement exceeded USDA actual minimum needs and that the 1983 procurement could have been inspected on an end-item lot basis consistent with the agency's standards. The protester alleged that competition was unduly restricted to those processors which had been approved to operate under continuous inspection. GAO will not question an agency's decision concerning its needs or the best methods of meeting them absent clear evidence that those decisions are arbitrary or otherwise unreasonable. Since GAO could not find the USDA requirement for continuous inspection to be unreasonable and since the protester failed to prove that the same assurances of quality and safety could be achieved through end-item lot inspection, GAO concluded that USDA did not act unreasonably by imposing the requirement. In addition, contrary to the protester's assertion, GAO found no Federal requirements for fish purchases to be inspected on an end-item basis. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

123088

AFDC Recipients Who Are Terminated for Not Submitting a Monthly Eligibility Report May Be Receiving Undetected Overpayments. HRD-83-70. July 20, 1983. 6 pp.

Report to John A. Svahn, Commissioner of Social Security, Social Security Administration; by Daniel W. Blades, Group Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Efficient Administration and Quality of Service of Needs-Based Cash Assistance Programs (1332).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Social Security Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means; Senate Committee on Finance

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35).

Abstract: GAO reviewed compliance with the intent and specific provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 as it applies to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. **Findings/Conclusions:** Title XXIII of the act contains provisions to retarget scarce financial resources by limiting AFDC eligibility and benefits to the truly needy, achieve cost savings through more efficient program administration, and require retrospective budgeting and monthly reporting under the AFDC program. GAO noted that 43 of the 50 States either already have or are in the process of implementing the AFDC monthly reporting requirement combined with a 2-month retrospective budgeting process. While 2 months allows the administering agency time to adjust benefits, the reporting sequence does not provide timely information on basic program eligibility. GAO found that States which utilize 2-month retrospective budgeting systems in conjunction with monthly reporting are susceptible to making undetected overpayments when recipients do not report changes affecting their eligibility and are discontinued from the rolls. Further, GAO found that there is no incentive for an ineligible recipient to submit a monthly report and, by not doing so, there is an opportunity to receive an unwarranted benefit. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Commissioner of Social Security should assess the magnitude of AFDC overpayments going undetected when recipients are terminated for monthly reporting noncompliance and, if warranted by the results of the assessment, develop a cost effective solution to avoid or minimize the overpayments.

123144

[Government-Owned Surplus Dairy Products Held in Inventory]. RCED-84-72; B-211447. December 20, 1983. Released December 27, 1983. 2 pp. plus 1 enclosure (7 pp.).

Report to Rep. Mary Rose Oskar; Rep. Marcy Kaptur; Rep. James L. Oberstar; Rep. Dennis E. Eckart; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to RCED-85-43, January 7, 1985, Accession Number 126027.

Issue Area: Food: Alternate Mechanisms To Provide Food to Low Income Target Populations (1746).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Dennis E. Eckart; Rep. Marcy Kaptur; Rep. Mary Rose Oskar; Rep. James L. Oberstar.

Abstract: In response to congressional requests, GAO provided information on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) dairy surplus inventory. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) as of September 23, 1983, USDA had about 3 billion pounds of dairy commodities in storage valued at \$3.7 billion; (2) there has

been minimal commodity spoilage and loss to the Government to date, but deterioration could occur in the future if dairy inventories continue to increase; and (3) USDA leased warehouse facilities, in general, are in good condition.

123280

[Feasibility of Providing the Armed Services With Additional Surplus Dairy Commodities Owned by USDA]. RCED-84-88; B-212726. January 17, 1984. Released January 24, 1984. 4 pp.

Report to Rep. Joseph G. Minish; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Alternate Mechanisms To Provide Food to Low Income Target Populations (1746).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.; Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Joseph G. Minish.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1446a(b)). Navy Ration Act (47 Stat. 1423). Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-180).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO gathered information on the feasibility of providing Department of Agriculture (USDA) surplus dairy commodities to the armed services and obtained information on the prices which the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and the armed services pay for dairy products. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, under the Agricultural Act of 1949, the armed services can order dairy products from CCC only in quantities which exceed their normal needs. The armed services must meet their normal needs by purchasing such products on the open market. If the law were revised to eliminate this restriction, providing the armed services' normal needs with CCC-owned dairy products would displace their commercial purchases. This would result in increasing the market surplus which CCC would have to purchase under its dairy price-support program and add to CCC dairy surplus inventories. CCC now pays less for butter and cheese than the armed services pay; however, it purchases products in bulk form, whereas the armed services purchase products in ready-to-use form. When CCC provides free cheese and butter to the armed services, it incurs additional costs to have these products processed into ready-to-use units for military use and the armed services reimburse CCC for the processing costs.

123295

WIC Evaluations Provide Some Favorable but No Conclusive Evidence on the Effects Expected for the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children. PEMD-84-4; B-176994. January 30, 1984. 58 pp. plus 4 appendices (20 pp.).

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Eleanor Chelmsky, Director, GAO Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to Testimony, March 15, 1984, Accession Number 123639.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Assuring the Performance of Effectiveness Evaluations To Create Information Needed by Congress (2616); Food: Improvement of the Effectiveness and Integrity of Child Nutrition Programs (1745).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0); Health: Health Research (552.0); Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2); Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture
Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.
Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Child Nutrition Act. P.L. 92-433

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed evaluations of the effectiveness of the Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The review focused on the effects of the program on miscarriages, still-births, neonatal deaths, maternal nutrition, and high-risk mothers, as well as claims that the WIC program is directly related to positive outcomes in these areas. GAO also reviewed the effect of the WIC program on birthweights and claims that the program reduces the chances for anemia and mental retardation in infants and children. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that there is insufficient information to make any general or conclusive judgments as to whether the WIC program is effective or not. However, there are indications that the program has had positive effects in some areas. Six evaluations gave some support for claims that the program increases infant birthweights. However, GAO did not find conclusive evidence that the WIC program: (1) lessened the number of fetal and neonatal deaths; (2) was associated with better maternal nutrition; (3) prevented anemia in infants and children; (4) had an effect on mental retardation; or (5) had a positive effect on the birthweights of the infants of mothers who were teenagers or blacks or had several health- and nutrition-related risks. GAO found almost no information about the separate effects of WIC services for food supplements, nutrition counseling, and adjunct health care. Many of the documents which GAO reviewed did not adequately describe the design, execution, or analyses that were used in the evaluation effort; therefore, it was difficult to determine the technical adequacy of the findings. However, progress has been seen in the improvement of designs and methodologies of recent evaluations.

123297

Economic Effects of Cargo Preference Laws. OCE-84-3; B-203314. January 31, 1984. 34 pp. plus 4 appendices (6 pp.).
Report to Rep. Walter B. Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; by Lawrence H. Thompson, Chief Economist, GAO Office of Chief Economist.

Issue Area: Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: The Key Elements or Options That Should Be Recognized in the Design of Subsidy Programs and How They Should Be Compared (4058); Transportation Systems and Policies: Determining the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Promotional Programs To Provide for a U.S. Maritime Industry Consistent With National Objectives (2435).

Contact: Office of Chief Economist.

Budget Function: Transportation: Water Transportation (403.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Transportation; Department of State; Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; *Rep.* Walter B. Jones.

Authority: Cargo Preference Act (Merchant Marine). Merchant Marine Act, 1920. Merchant Marine Act, 1936. Military Transportation Act of 1904. P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: Using 1980 shipping data, GAO analyzed the dependency of the U.S.-flag fleet on cargo preference laws, the economic effects of cargo preference, and the effect of eliminating the cargo preference requirement for the Food-for-Peace program. **Findings/Conclusions:** Cargo preference laws mandate that at least 50 percent of all U.S. Government-owned or -financed cargo shipped between American and foreign ports be carried on U.S.-flag ships. GAO believes that the following general conclusions regarding the effects of cargo preference laws are valid provided the assumptions used in analyzing 1980 data remain

applicable (1) the maritime industry depends on cargo preference laws for some of its cargo, but not all Government cargo carried on U.S.-flag ships is transported because of cargo preference laws; (2) additional U.S.-flag ships and American crews are employed in transporting Government cargo; (3) the Government pays more to ship its cargo than it would if it were allowed to use less expensive foreign-flag ships; and (4) the Food-for-Peace program is a major source of cargo carried on U.S.-flag ships because of cargo preference laws

123347

Federal and State Initiatives Needed To Improve Productivity and Reduce Administrative Costs of the Aid to Families With Dependent Children and Food Stamp Programs. AFMD-84-18; B-214174. February 2, 1984. 33 pp. plus 15 appendices (35 pp.).

Report to Margaret M. Heckler, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Wilbur D. Campbell, Acting Director, GAO Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Issue Area: National Productivity: Restructuring the Federal Grants System To Enhance Its Impact on Productivity (2908); Income Security and Social Services: Eligibility Determinations (1307); Intergovernmental Policies and Fiscal Relations: Assessing the Impact of Federally Mandated Standards and Costs on State and Local Governments (0410).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Other General Government (806.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.
Authority: H. Rept. 96-285.

Abstract: Administrative costs in the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) and Food Stamp programs have increased at a more rapid pace than benefit payments to recipients. GAO reviewed the processing of AFDC and Food Stamp applications at 15 welfare offices in 8 states. This review was based on a comparison of the productivity of these offices. GAO also examined the impact that inconsistent federal criteria for determining an applicant's income and assets, and different federal time periods for processing AFDC and Food Stamp cases, have on productivity. **Findings/Conclusions:** From its review, GAO found that productivity rates of workers directly involved in processing AFDC and Food Stamp applications varied widely among the 15 welfare offices. This variance resulted primarily from processing practices, which included case-processing methods, use of computers, management expectation of employee performance, and efforts to verify applicants' data. Although the Department of Health and Human Services considered demographic factors to be a key cause of productivity variances in the AFDC program, GAO determined that they did not have a significant impact on the 15 offices. In addition, GAO found that: (1) federal requirements for determining an applicant's income and assets hinder state and local case-processing productivity; and (2) federal agencies need to emphasize productivity in much the same way as they have emphasized reducing payment errors. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services should establish a nationwide productivity measurement and reporting system for the AFDC and Food Stamp programs. The Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services should establish a joint mechanism for identifying the best operating practices, including changes in federal laws and regulations, that will facilitate prompt, accurate, and efficient

processing for both programs. The Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services should formulate uniform federal financial requirements for measuring incomes and assets, setting common time periods for processing applications and closing out cases, and proposing legislative change as necessary for congressional action

123461

Government Could Save Millions by Revising Its Purchase Specification for Ground Beef. RCED-84-29, B-204947 February 21, 1984. 23 pp. plus 3 appendices (13 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Food Quality Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741); General Procurement: Improving Contract Administration (1933)

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0); National Defense: Department of Defense - Procurement and Contracts (051.2)

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Defense; Veterans Administration; Department of Agriculture: Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Governmental Efficiency and the District of Columbia Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1755). 7 U.S.C. 612c. Interim Federal Specification PP-B-2120.

Abstract: The major federal agencies that buy ground beef require that the product meet certain formulation and certification specifications, some of these specifications increase the material costs and restrict the flexibility of suppliers without increasing the quality, flavor, or nutritional value of the meat. GAO reviewed this matter to determine whether the federal government could buy ground beef at a lower cost. **Findings/Conclusions:** Ground beef suppliers and meat experts told GAO that, despite the Government's formulation and certification requirements for its meat purchasing, the commercial product, which accounts for more than 95 percent of U.S. ground beef production, is adequate for the government's use. Commercial customers rely on the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to ensure the quality of their meat products. The government could have saved about \$20 million of the \$181 million it spent for ground beef in fiscal year 1982 if it had purchased commercial ground beef. Further, if the responsibility for product quality assurance were transferred to FSIS, at least 2 cents per pound could be saved by eliminating some duplication in the certification process. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should modify the federal purchase specification for ground beef to enable the government to purchase ground beef more economically.

123533

AID Needs To Strengthen Management of Commodity Import Programs. NSIAD-84-47; B-213871. February 29, 1984. 43 pp. plus 1 appendix (22 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630)

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151 0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Foreign Assistance Act of 1971 (22 U.S.C. 2346). 22 C.F.R. 201. P.L. 80-480 OMB Circular A-123.

Abstract: GAO evaluated the extent of the Agency for International Development's (AID) program and financial controls over the Commodity Import Program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that AID has not always adequately planned procurements or commodity deliveries. In some instances, commodities arrive too late and at increased cost. Although regulations prescribe that AID-financed commodities must meet eligibility and price requirements, AID has not always used adequate internal controls to ensure compliance, and insufficient reviews of commodity transactions have contributed to waste and improper expenditures that could amount to millions of dollars annually. In addition, GAO found that AID does not adequately monitor the implementation of commodity import programs and local currency generation and use. AID missions have not conducted or documented required evaluations of the host-government commodity arrival accounting systems nor systematically followed up on the distribution and end-use of commodities. As a result, AID cannot adequately account for the arrival and disposition of commodities. This occurs because missions do not have sufficient staff and guidance on monitoring the program implementation. Furthermore, GAO found that AID missions are not effectively monitoring the proceeds from commodity sales. Finally, despite a legislative mandate to improve the assessment of AID programs, AID has not developed procedures for evaluation of the program which would provide information to design future programs. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of AID should establish procedures requiring more specific pre-implementation of Commodity Import Program planning which would include realistic, time-phased implementation schedules and would provide for modifying plans when established milestones can no longer be reasonably met. The Administrator of AID should increase audit coverage of commodity transactions financed under bank letters of commitment. The Administrator of AID should strengthen established procedures for financing commodities under the direct reimbursement method by determining that personnel authorized to perform eligibility reviews are qualified. The Administrator of AID should study the need to transfer the commodity voucher audit function from the Office of Commodity Management to another organization within AID where its degree of independence would be enhanced. The Administrator of AID should require responsible officials to issue letters of commitment in appropriate standard language which would clearly inform and bind suppliers to AID requirements. The Administrator of AID should issue specific guidance to AID missions on monitoring the implementation of commodity import programs, including the arrival accounting and disposition of commodities. The Administrator of AID should ensure that missions comply with established monitoring procedures. The Administrator of AID should issue guidelines on accounting for the generation of local currency proceeds resulting from the sale of AID-financed commodities. The Administrator of AID should issue appropriate guidance on monitoring the use of local currency generated from the sale of commodities. The Administrator of AID should direct the Office of Evaluation to

establish a requirement for evaluating Commodity Import Program assistance and develop specific guidance for those performing such evaluations.

123624

[GAO Reviews of Foreign Economic Assistance Programs]. March 14, 1984. 14 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee.

Authority: P.L. 80-480.

Abstract: Testimony was given concerning recently completed and ongoing GAO work on U.S. economic assistance programs. A major trend in recent years has been the increased use of the Economic Support Fund (ESF) which is used for balance-of-payments support and commodity import programs and to finance infrastructure and other capital projects. The ESF program has increased by over 55 percent since 1981, and the number of countries receiving bilateral ESF assistance has increased at an even greater rate. During the past year, GAO reported that one of the key objectives supported by the ESF program is to ensure continued U.S. access to military facilities in foreign countries. Although the United States remains a leading donor country, its share of the world's total development assistance has steadily declined. In response to this trend, GAO compared the approach used by the United States with those of five other nations and discussed the implications of applying the foreign aid management approaches used by other donors to the Agency for International Development (AID) program. GAO recently evaluated the extent of AID program and financial controls over commodity import programs and reported that AID has not always adequately planned procurements and delivery of commodities or used adequate internal controls or monitoring. In addition, there has been inadequate financial support for the recurring costs associated with the operation and maintenance of some programs. GAO also reviewed AID programs which provide credit guarantees to developing countries and found that, in several countries, such programs have been at a standstill since 1981 due to economic recessions and problems with program management. Finally, GAO has reported that AID has not taken adequate measures to promote the reform of host-government agricultural policies in Africa. GAO found that the lack of host-government financial management capability is most serious in Africa and has in process a review designed to identify how donors can define management training needs and provide related assistance.

123639

[Evaluations of WIC's Effectiveness]. March 15, 1984. 12 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, GAO Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Refer to PEMD-84-4, February 8, 1984, Accession Number 123295.

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Abstract: GAO discussed evaluations of the effectiveness of the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children

(WIC), focusing on the effects of the program on miscarriages, stillbirths, neonatal deaths, maternal nutrition, and high-risk mothers. GAO noted that there is insufficient evaluation information to make any general or conclusive judgments as to whether the WIC program is effective or not. Many of the documents which GAO reviewed did not adequately describe the design, execution, or analyses that were used in evaluations. However, there are indications that the program has had positive effects in some areas. Further, improvement has been seen in the design and methodology of recent evaluations. GAO concluded that sufficient evidence is available to support numerous inferences about the WIC program, but no definite conclusions can be made.

123647

Electronic Marketing of Agricultural Commodities: An Evolutionary Trend. RCED-84-97; B-214420. March 8, 1984. Released March 12, 1984. 15 pp. plus 2 appendices (2 pp.).

Report to Rep. Parren J. Mitchell, Chairman, House Committee on Small Business; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Action To Improve Efficiency in Food Marketing (1740); Consumer and Worker Protection: FTC's Role for Protecting Consumers From Unfair or Deceptive Trade Practices (0928).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Small Business; Rep. Parren J. Mitchell

Authority: Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7 U.S.C. 181 et seq.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on the efforts of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop electronic marketing for agricultural commodities, the benefits and problems of electronic marketing, and the status of electronic marketing in agriculture. **Findings/Conclusions:** USDA is monitoring the use of electronic systems in marketing livestock, providing educational activities to persons interested in learning about electronic marketing systems, and funding pilot projects to demonstrate the feasibility of computerized electronic marketing. Overall, the projects demonstrated that agricultural commodities can be traded electronically and that electronic marketing is a feasible alternative to current marketing systems. However, the studies showed that, to be successful and economically viable, trading volume must be sufficient to cover the fixed and operating costs of an electronic market as well as to attract and keep traders in the system. The projects showed that electronic marketing improved market information, increased marketing efficiency, increased competition, and increased access to the market for both buyers and sellers. In addition, transportation costs are lower because an electronic market eliminates the need for central assembly of products prior to sale. Some of the problems associated with electronic marketing include concerns that: products cannot be adequately described, personal interchange will be lost, buyers and sellers will not perform according to the terms stipulated in the trade, and that electronic marketing is not cost-effective. In addition, some potential users are unwilling to participate or see no advantage in participating.

123688

More Attention Needed in Key Areas of the Expanded Crop Insurance Program. RCED-84-65; B-214525. March 14, 1984. 51 pp. plus 3 appendices (5 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738)

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: GAO reviewed actuarial practices of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), the rates at which private sector companies are compensated for selling and servicing crop insurance, and the distribution of gains and losses on crop insurance sold by private companies and reinsured by FCIC. **Findings/Conclusions:** Congress has expressed concern regarding FCIC progress in implementing the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980, the effectiveness of program changes when insurance losses in 1981 and 1982 are considered, and the annual increases in FCIC appropriation requests. GAO found that, following enactment of the legislation, FCIC made substantial progress in expanding the program and involving the private sector in selling and servicing crop insurance. However, FCIC did not give appropriate attention to ensure that its insurance was actuarially sound, did not carefully evaluate its actions involving the private sector, nor make a detailed cost study when it established the compensation rates for the private sector companies' sales and service activities. Under the expanded reinsurance program, private insurance companies obtain reinsurance coverage from FCIC as protection against part of the risk of insuring crops. Allowed annual revisions to the standard reinsurance agreement have resulted in increased costs and risks to FCIC. GAO noted that FCIC has initiated numerous actions that should improve the insurance paperwork submitted by independent insurance agents and taken steps to develop a comprehensive quality control program and a plan for an independent audit of the reinsured companies. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FCIC Board of Directors and Manager to moderate any further expansion so that it will not detract from the actuarial division's ability to update the crop insurance offers. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FCIC Board of Directors and Manager to correct any inaccuracies that may be found in the recently established county insurance offers of FCIC and, if necessary, correct its older county insurance offers that may be inappropriate in light of the increased risk that may be associated with implementing the legislative requirements for higher coverages. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FCIC Board of Directors and Manager to give increased attention to completing actuarial reports depicting crop year 1980 and 1981 insurance experiences in order that the review and updating of the FCIC crop insurance programs might be expedited. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FCIC Board of Directors and Manager to consider the potential for obtaining actual crop yield data and using such data to establish homogeneous risk groups and the proper relationships among each group's yields and risk rates. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FCIC Board of Directors and Manager to evaluate the rates established for compensating the private sector in relation to the current or expected premium base and the private sector's costs to provide such services; the rate structure should, if warranted, be adjusted to provide reasonable compensation to the private sector for its services

and, at the same time, be cost effective to the federal government. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FCIC Board of Directors and Manager to moderate further expansion of the reinsurance program until the operation of the current program can be evaluated to ensure that it is cost effective for both the government and the insurance companies. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FCIC Board of Directors and Manager to tailor the reinsurance agreements to each company's area of operation and base the gain and loss formula on the loss experience for the geographic area in which the company operates.

123706

Improved Administration of Special Surplus Dairy Product Distribution Program Needed. RCED-84-58; B-207223. March 14, 1984. 31 pp. plus 4 appendices (19 pp.).

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Cooper Evans; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to Testimony, April 25, 1984, Accession Number 123992.

Issue Area: Food: Alternate Mechanisms To Provide Food to Low Income Target Populations (1746).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. Cooper Evans; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949. Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-180). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-8). P.L. 97-6. P.L. 97-253. P.L. 98-92.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) program for distributing surplus dairy products to the needy. Specifically, GAO was asked to determine whether program administration adequately ensured that products were provided only to the needy and to develop estimates on the extent to which donated products displaced commercial sales. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO believes that the absence of national program guidelines on key issues, such as the target population to be served and controls to ensure that participants are eligible, contributed to widely varying programs among the States and, in some cases, among localities. GAO found that: (1) three of the eight States studied had not established any needs tests for program participants; (2) distribution frequencies and quantities of products made available to participants varied; (3) controls over the distribution of products were generally inadequate; and (4) until April 1983, when the quantities of products made available were cut back, the states were able to order virtually unlimited amounts of dairy products. As a result, abuses occurred and displacement of commercial sales was greater than necessary. Legislation enacted in September 1983 required the establishment of program criteria and required the Department of Agriculture to: (1) provide commodities in quantities which can be used without waste; (2) ensure that the commodities provided do not displace commercial sales; and (3) minimize the paperwork requirements imposed on distribution agencies. To the extent that products given away displace commercial sales, they increase market surpluses which USDA is

obligated to purchase under the Dairy Price-Support Program and increase USDA inventories of dairy products. GAO estimated that about 31 percent of the cheese distributed from December 1981 to April 1983 in the eight States would have displaced commercial sales of cheese. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Administrator to make sure that the final regulations issued by FNS, at a minimum, establish some parameters on the eligibility criteria established by states to help create more equitable state and local programs and to help minimize the extent of commercial sales displacement resulting from the program. In establishing such parameters, FNS should consider the amount of commercial sales displacement likely to occur at various household income levels on the basis of data compiled through USDA household food consumption surveys. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the FNS Administrator to make sure that the final regulations issued by FNS minimize program abuse by requiring states to develop reasonable program controls. Such controls should, as a minimum, require program participants to provide identification and evidence of eligibility.

123778

[Income Analysis of Farmers Home Administration Subsidized Rural Homebuyers in 1983]. RCED-84-145; B-214747. March 26, 1984. Released April 2, 1984. 4 pp. plus 1 enclosure (3 pp.). Report to Sen. Edwin (Jake) Garn, Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Domestic Housing and Community Development: Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (2151).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development, Community Development (451 0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Sen. Edwin (Jake) Garn.

Authority: Housing Act. Housing Act of 1949. Rural Housing Amendments of 1983.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the incomes of the rural households who purchased homes under the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) home-ownership program in fiscal year 1983 to determine the effect that new targeting provisions and income limits enacted by Congress in 1983 would have had on the eligibility of those assisted in 1983. **Findings/Conclusions:** The FmHA program provides low interest rate subsidized loans to eligible households who earn less than 80 percent of area median income with certain adjustments for family size. The Rural Housing Amendments of 1983 stated that, nationwide, not less than 40 percent of the loans could be made to households whose incomes did not exceed 50 percent of the area median income with adjustments for family size. Not less than 30 percent of the loans in each State are to be provided to very low-income households. Of 53,466 household files which GAO analyzed, 84 percent of the households would have qualified for assistance had the new eligibility criteria been in effect in 1983. GAO also found that about 24 percent of all borrowers would have been classified as very low income in 1983 under the new rules. If the households who would not have qualified under the new rules were excluded from the calculations, then 28 percent of qualified borrowers would have had very low incomes in 1983. Only two States would have exceeded the 40-percent requirement for very low-income households, while six States would have exceeded the 30 percent minimum for individual States. There has been substantial variation from region to region in the degree of income targeting under the new eligibility limits,

and the greatest degree of targeting has occurred in the south. Under the new law, income limits for small households were generally reduced while those for larger households were increased, and qualifying incomes will rise considerably in some locations.

123779

Participation in the National School Lunch Program. RCED-84-132; B-214750. March 30, 1984. Released April 2, 1984. 5 pp plus 7 appendices (25 pp.).

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to Testimony, April 25, 1984, Accession Number 123992.

Issue Area: Food, Improvement of the Effectiveness and Integrity of Child Nutrition Programs (1745).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security; Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-499). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed participation in the National School Lunch Program during the years immediately preceding and following changes in the Federal reimbursement rates to schools and income eligibility criteria for free and reduced-price meals made by the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 and the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. GAO: (1) determined the number of students receiving free, reduced-price, and full-price school lunches; (2) determined the extent to which schools and students have dropped out of the program in recent years; (3) compared data on the number of families with eligible children and incomes meeting program eligibility criteria with program expenditure data; and (4) discussed data on School Lunch Program participation reported by the President's Task Force on Food Assistance. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, over the past 5 years, the number of students participating in the School Lunch Program has declined from 27 million to 23.1 million. This decline is primarily attributable to reductions in the number of students eating full-price lunches. There has been a 2.9-percent decline in the number of schools in the nation over the past 5 years and a 6.5-percent decline in student enrollment. Although the 1980 and 1981 acts tightened eligibility criteria, total Federal expenditures for the School Lunch Program were greater in 1983 than at any time in the 5-year period except the peak year of 1981. During the same period, a greater share of Federal School Lunch Program expenditures was used to provide students with free lunches. Between 1979 and 1982, the number of families with school-age children and incomes at or below the nonfarm income poverty level increased, the number of families with children eligible for reduced-price lunches also increased, but the number of higher income families decreased. In addition, Federal expenditures for reduced-price and full-price lunches decreased. The President's Task Force on Food Assistance concluded that the percentage of families at or below the poverty threshold with school-age children and receiving free or reduced-price lunches remained stable between 1979 and 1982 and participation in the program declined for families with higher incomes. GAO found that these findings were consistent with the trends it reported.

123783

An Evaluation of the 1981 AFDC Changes: Initial Analyses.

PEMD-84-6, B-214752 April 2, 1984. 6 pp plus 3 appendices (6 pp.) plus 1 enclosure (44 pp.)

Report to Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; Rep. Barber B. Conable, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, GAO Program Evaluation and Methodology Division

Refer to Testimony, May 5, 1984, Accession Number 124040.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology: Assuring the Performance of Effectiveness Evaluations To Create Information Needed by Congress (2616).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means; Rep. Barber B. Conable; Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO evaluated the effect of changes in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 on the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. **Findings/Conclusions:** Several months after the act's changes, national AFDC caseloads and outlays had decreased. GAO estimated that 493,000 fewer cases were open during an average month, and outlays were \$93 million less during an average month than before the enactment. Overall, the act affected working AFDC recipients disproportionately. Large percentages of AFDC earner cases were either closed or had their AFDC grants reduced. Many earners who lost AFDC reported that they simultaneously lost food stamp benefits. GAO found that most earners who lost AFDC benefits did not quit their jobs and return to AFDC. For nonearners, the pattern of AFDC use was generally the same before and after the enactment. All of the families interviewed were categorically eligible for Medicaid while they were receiving AFDC, but few were receiving Medicaid or any other form of Government subsidized health care after they lost their AFDC benefits. Approximately half of the families which lost AFDC benefits had no health insurance coverage. The respondents in four sites reported the occurrence of various hardships, such as the need to borrow money and the lack of food, significantly more often after enactment.

123785

CWEP's Implementation Results to Date Raise Questions About the Administration's Proposed Mandatory Workfare Program. PEMD-84-2; B-208885. April 2, 1984. 30 pp. plus 3 appendices (15 pp.).

Report to Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; Sen. Robert J. Dole, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, GAO Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Issue Area: Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology (2600); Income Security and Social Services (1300).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Training and Employment (504.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means; Senate Committee on Finance; Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski; Sen. Robert J. Dole.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35)

Abstract: GAO examined the implementation of the Community Work Experience Programs (CWEP) under the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program in 16 States. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the States' programs do not address the typical goals of workfare. For example, in the 13 States where CWEP has been implemented, participants are not required to work off the value of their AFDC grants at unpaid jobs. The various State programs substitute job-search or classroom-training activities for some CWEP hours, provide compensation which exceeds work expenses, or mandate fewer hours per month or fewer months than would be required to work off an entire grant. Most employable adult AFDC recipients are not participating in CWEP, chiefly because only four programs are State-wide and many adults are either exempt or not required to participate. One of the administration's primary reasons for proposing CWEP as a workfare program was to save money, yet State officials provided little evidence to show that implementation of CWEP has changed the net costs of AFDC. However, most State officials stated that CWEP provides a service to the community, helps the participants psychologically and gives them work skills, and increases public confidence in the fairness of the welfare system. The administration has proposed legislative changes which would require that CWEP be implemented more like a workfare program, such as requiring all States to implement comprehensive work programs and penalizing States for not employing at least 75 percent of their welfare recipients in such programs. GAO believes that enactment of these changes would increase the short-term costs of CWEP, but that long-term savings might more than offset the initial increases.

123795

The Federal Tobacco Program: Expensive, Conflicting, and Controversial. 1984. 3 pp.

by Michael T. Blair, Evaluator, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

In *The GAO Review*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, Winter 1984, pp. 25, 36-37.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. Agricultural Act of 1949. No Net Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982.

Abstract: This article discusses the Federal tobacco price support program, which conflicts with current legislation designed to warn cigarette consumers of the health hazards involved in their use. Under the program, the Government currently has price-support loans outstanding on tobacco valued at over \$1.5 billion and, from its inception, the program has cost taxpayers over \$840 million in interest. The program worked fairly well prior to the late 1970's; however, as the price support of U.S. tobacco rose, domestic and foreign markets were lost, and large amounts of tobacco came under Government loan. New legislation is discussed which will require tobacco producers to pay for the program's acquisition, carrying, and interest costs.

123876

Foreign Currency Purchases Can Be Reduced Through Greater Use of Currency Use Payments Under Public Law 480 Commodity Sales Agreements. NSIAD-84-76; B-214252. April 10, 1984. 8 pp.

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; George P. Shultz, Secretary, Department of State; Donald T. Regan, Secretary, Department of the Treasury; M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by David A. Littleton, (for Frank C. Conahan, Director), GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Food Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency of U.S. Efforts To Alleviate Food Problems in Developing Countries (1734); International Affairs Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of the Treasury; Department of State; Department of Agriculture; Agency for International Development; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: GAO examined the U.S. collections of local currencies payable under provisions in certain commodity sales agreements to see whether they are being collected in a timely manner. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that amounts owed remained uncollected while needed local currencies were purchased with dollars from commercial sources. Purchases of local currencies could have been reduced by \$29 million between October 1981 and September 1983 by collecting the amounts payable. Since the dollar equivalent of collections is credited to the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Corporation may have to reduce its program level or obtain necessary funds from other sources, if receipts are less than projected. If amounts uncollected as of September 1983 are collected, they may reduce further dollar purchases; if they remain uncollected, their equivalent amounts are payable in dollars when the credit installments become due. GAO found that no system has been established to ensure timely currency use payments collections. The collections are the responsibility of individual State Department missions. However, the missions do not directly benefit from the collection efforts. Agreements for fiscal year 1982 with seven countries where local currencies were purchased contained no currency use payment provisions because of political reasons or oversight. In addition, greater use of these provisions may be constrained by the conflicting interests of the agencies involved. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Food Aid, should take the lead in establishing guidelines and procedures for: (1) collecting currency use payments on a timely basis; and (2) determining the extent to which needed local currencies will be obtained through the Public Law 480 commodity sales program rather than through dollar outlays. The Secretary of the Treasury should: (1) establish procedures for systematically identifying delinquent local currency payments, sending timely reminders to the missions, and bringing delinquencies before the Subcommittee on Food Aid when negotiating agreements for additional commodities; and (2) promote greater use of currency use payment provisions in commodity sales agreements to generate local currencies for U.S. needs. The Secretary of State should issue a directive to the missions to expedite commodity use payment collections by: (1) requesting payments promptly to satisfy local currency needs in accordance with Treasury notifications of commodity use payment availability and collection guidelines; and (2) obtaining approval from the Treasury and the Subcommittee on Food Aid before delaying collections. In transmitting information to the missions regarding future commodity use payment availability and collection procedures for individual agreements, the Secretary should refer the missions to this directive. The Administrator of the Agency for International

Development (AID) should collaborate with other members of the Subcommittee in establishing interagency currency use payment guidelines. Until such time as overall guidelines have been established, the Administrator should ensure that the AID guidelines are applied in a manner that balances the AID development mandate with the desirability of reducing dollar outlays to meet U.S. local currency needs

123908

Regulation of the Poultry Industry Under the Packers and Stockyards Act. RCED-84-110, B-214753. April 13, 1984. 19 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Staff Study by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Need for Federal Action To Improve Efficiency in Food Marketing (1740); Consumer and Worker Protection: FTC's Role for Protecting Consumers From Unfair or Deceptive Trade Practices (0928).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Packers and Stockyards Administration.

Authority: Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7 U.S.C. 181 et seq.), Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO studied the poultry industry and the regulation of the industry by the Department of Agriculture (USDA), focusing on: (1) industry structure; (2) differences between regulation of the poultry and the livestock industries; and (3) issues and concerns affecting regulation of the poultry industry. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the poultry industry has changed from one of small independent producers into a highly integrated industry in which producers grow poultry under contracts with processors. Poultry consumers have benefited from this integration because of increased production, decreased real prices, and consistent quality. The poultry industry is regulated by USDA, Packers and Stockyards Administration. The Administration regulates the industry by ensuring that contracts between producers and processors are complied with. Regulation of the poultry industry differs from regulation of the livestock industry in that USDA has no authority to issue cease and desist orders in poultry cases. USDA must report violations in poultry cases to the Department of Justice for possible prosecution. Problems facing the poultry industry include: (1) poultry growers not being paid by processors that declare bankruptcy; and (2) the recent outbreak of avian flu, which caused over 10 million birds to be destroyed as of February, 1984. GAO found varying opinions among poultry producers and processors as to whether these problems mandate legislative changes in USDA regulatory authority over the poultry industry.

123922

[Federal and State Efforts To Conserve and Protect the Southern Sea Otter Population]. RCED-84-139; B-198126. April 17, 1984. 7 pp.

Report to Rep. John B. Breaux, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Trends in Fish Productivity and Opportunities for Improvements (1739).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0)

Organization Concerned: United States Fish and Wildlife Service; Marine Mammal Commission; California: Department of Fish and Game.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; *Rep.* John B. Breaux.

Authority: Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.). Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the status of Federal and State efforts to conserve and protect the southern sea otter population, which is located off the California coast. **Findings/Conclusions:** Problems associated with Federal and State management of the sea otter include: (1) conflicts between sea otter interest groups, shellfish interest groups, the oil and gas industry, and commercial and recreational fishermen; (2) the limited range and small population of sea otters, which make them vulnerable to oil spills; and (3) sea otter mortality from fish net entanglement. Shellfish interest groups and fishermen are concerned because sea otters eat economically valuable shellfish. The oil and gas industry is concerned that plans to relocate sea otter colonies could interfere with exploration and development activities. Efforts to protect sea otters include: (1) California Department of Fish and Game monitoring of fishery-induced otter mortality; (2) Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) development of various plans to translocate sea otter colonies, and (3) Marine Mammal Commission oversight activities. Pursuant to a Commission recommendation, FWS will soon appoint a full-time coordinator for sea otter protection and conservation activities.

123944

Opportunities for Greater Cost Effectiveness in Public Law 480, Title I Food Purchases. NSIAD-84-69; B-199688. April 19, 1984. 33 pp. plus 1 appendix (11 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Increasing the Effectiveness of U.S. Humanitarian Assistance (0639); International Affairs: Effectiveness of U.S. Government Export Stimulation Programs (0620); Food: Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency of U.S. Efforts To Alleviate Food Problems in Developing Countries (1734).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1); International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480; 7 U.S.C. 1691 et seq.). 7 C.F.R. 17.6(b)(2).

Abstract: GAO discussed opportunities to improve the effectiveness of subsidized food purchases by recipient, developing countries under the Public Law 480, Title I program. **Findings/Conclusions:** Under the program, the Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service in fiscal year (FY) 1982 financed about \$722 million worth of purchases of agricultural commodities by developing countries. GAO examined 54 of the

86 purchases made in FY 1982 and found that opportunities exist to better control or reduce program costs. In 26 percent of the cases GAO reviewed, buyer purchasing practices were not conducive to achieving the full benefits of open competitive tendering or obtaining the lowest prices. Delays in signing Title I agreements and overlapping of purchases with the Title II program caused prices to rise. GAO found that the Foreign Agricultural Service is financing price premiums for individualized and non-standard specifications when lower cost alternatives are available. GAO noted that the legal requirement that the United States receive a fair share of the increase in recipients' commercial imports over time is not monitored or emphasized. Finally, GAO concluded that: (1) the credibility of the price evaluation system is questionable; (2) the Foreign Agricultural Service price reviewers routinely approved sales prices that exceeded the market price as determined by the Stabilization and Conservation Service; and (3) the Stabilization and Conservation Service needs to survey a broader cross-section of the industry to better establish market prices for certain commodities. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, to: (1) work for earlier signings of Title I annual agreements and a wider spread of procurements over the year; (2) establish a required minimum amount of time between (a) the issuance of invitations for bids and bid openings and (b) bid openings and the first delivery dates; (3) reemphasize the requirement of the Title I regulations that buyers select the lowest responsive bids and that the Foreign Agricultural Service require and document the justification for any exceptions; and (4) eliminate close or overlapping Title I and Title II, Public Law 480 purchases. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, to require that recipients finance any additional premiums for individualized or nonstandard specifications unless a definite need has been established and justified. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, to more carefully monitor import statistics and emphasize the legislative requirements to take reasonable precautions to safeguard the usual U.S. markets and to take steps to ensure the United States a fair share of any increase in commercial purchases in countries which have rising imports. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, to strengthen the export market price-gathering function of the Kansas City Commodity Office for wheat flour and spring wheat. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, to: (1) disapprove any Title I bid price that exceeds the export market price as determined by the Stabilization Service for the comparable commodity specification and shipping mode and (2) develop a system for evaluating Title I rice prices that uses the broadest practical range of information sources.

123967

[Federal Crop Insurance Program in North Carolina and Iowa]. RCED-84-120; B-214525. March 16, 1984. Released April 17, 1984. 3 pp. plus 5 enclosures (16 pp.).

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Roger W. Jepsen, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to RCED-84-65, March 14, 1984, Accession Number 123688.

Issue Area: Food: Improvement of the Food Marketing and Distribution Process (1716).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Federal Crop Insurance Corp

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Roger W. Jepsen; Sen. Jesse A. Helms

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Program, which is administered by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). Specifically, GAO was asked to obtain information about how the program was working in North Carolina and Iowa.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, in North Carolina, the number of acres insured under the program dropped from 17 percent of the total planted acres in 1982 to 12 percent in 1983; in Iowa, the acres insured dropped from 16 percent in 1982 to 11 percent in 1983. Producers cited various reasons for not buying Federal crop insurance, including the high cost of premiums, covering their own losses, and low yield coverage. Although FCIC spent almost \$12 million to advertise the crop insurance program, a study showed that producer awareness of the program was about the same before and after the advertising campaign. FCIC must maintain a loss ratio of 1.0 or lower for indemnities paid to premiums received to remain actuarially sound. In North Carolina and Iowa the loss ratios were below that figure for 1982. However, loss ratios varied substantially within crops.

123969

[Multiplier Effect of the Agricultural Sector on the General Economy]. RCED-84-56; B-214874. April 17, 1984. Released April 20, 1984. 4 pp. plus 1 enclosure (10 pp.)

Report to Rep. E. (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Best Management and Planning Tools Applicable to the Food and Agriculture System and Their Uses (1736).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; Rep. E. (Kika) De La Garza.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the relationship between the agricultural sector and the rest of the national economy. GAO was asked to provide information on: (1) Federal tax revenues generated by Federal agricultural program expenditures; and (2) the multiplier effect of the agricultural sector on the national economy. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO was unable to determine a specific multiplier for the agricultural sector or to compare it with multipliers for other sectors. GAO was able to obtain information on definitions and techniques used by economists to measure multiplier effects. A multiplier is a measure of the relationship between an initial increase in spending in one sector of the economy and the total increase in spending in all sectors of the economy as a result of the initial increase. The increase in total spending will be greater because the recipients of the initial increase spend some of what they receive in other sectors. GAO found that: (1) most analyses of the multiplier effect for the agricultural sector have focused on particular products or regions; and (2) those studies that had wider focuses used a variety of definitions for multipliers and different methods of determining multiplier effects. GAO stated that, if a consistent set of studies were available for calculating multiplier effects in various sectors of the economy, multiplier analysis would be a useful tool for measuring the impacts of different economic sectors on one another.

123992

[General Accounting Office Reviews of Domestic Food Assistance Programs]. April 25, 1984. 10 pp.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to RCED-83-40, February 4, 1983, Accession Number 120537; CED-79-55, February 27, 1979, Accession Number 108831; RCED-84-132, March 30, 1984, Accession Number 123779; RCED-84-58, March 14, 1984, Accession Number 123706; CED-82-34, January 29, 1982, Accession Number 117346; and CED-78-183, December 28, 1978, Accession Number 108250.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. S. 993 (98th Cong.)

Abstract: Testimony was given on GAO work relating to the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) domestic food assistance programs, including reports on (1) overissued Food Stamp Program benefits; (2) wage matching, collections, and corrective action plans in the Food Stamp Program; (3) error-rate sanction systems for needs-based programs; (4) benefit targeting and related issues in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); (5) School Lunch Program participation; and (6) the special commodity distribution program. Testimony was also presented on recently started work involving: (1) eligibility redeterminations in the Food Stamp and the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Programs, (2) food stamp benefit delivery systems; and (3) the authorization and monitoring of retail vendors in the Food Stamp and WIC Programs. Because of approximately \$1 billion a year in overpayments in the Food Stamp Program, GAO concluded that States need to identify specific overissuance cases, institute collection action, and pursue suspected fraud. In a review of Food Stamp wage matching programs in five States, GAO found significant differences between employer-reported wage data and the household-reported earnings shown in case files due to mismanagement by the local offices. USDA and the States could provide better guidance and training on how to carry out wage-matching responsibilities. Similar difficulties were being experienced in the AFDC Program. In addition, GAO found that States have collected only about 1 percent of each overissued Food Stamp dollar and recommended that Congress amend the Food Stamp Act to provide for mandatory offset against benefits for overpayments caused by error and that States be required to recover overissuances against persons no longer receiving benefits. GAO has also found that program error-rate targets have differed, and sanctioned States have not paid the Government for any sanctions assessed against them for Food Stamp or AFDC overpayments. USDA could do more to encourage the targeting of WIC benefits to those considered to be at the greatest nutritional risk. GAO reported a decline in participation in the School Lunch Program from 1979 to 1983 because fewer students ate full-price lunches; however, total Federal expenditures for the program have increased. Finally, GAO reported on a lack of guidelines for the special commodity distribution program.

124028

Federal and State Liability for Inaccurate Payments of Food Stamp, AFDC, and SSI Program Benefits. RCED-84-155; B-215017. April 25, 1984. 8 pp. plus 5 appendices (43 pp.).

Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Efficient Administration and Quality of Service of Needs-Based Cash Assistance Programs (1332)

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Social Security Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, *Sen. Jesse A. Helms*.

Authority: Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the error-rate sanction system for the Food Stamp program and compared it to systems used for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) programs. Sanction systems are used to hold states, or the federal government, responsible for excessive errors in determining applicants' eligibility and benefit levels. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that sanction systems for the three programs establish error-rate thresholds for erroneous payments and impose financial sanctions for errors that exceed the thresholds. The three systems differ regarding: (1) who is liable and for what; (2) applicable error-rate thresholds; (3) calculation of sanctions; and (4) waiver procedures to reduce sanction liabilities. For the Food Stamp and AFDC programs, states are liable for excessive errors involving federal funds. Under the SSI program, which is administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), the federal government is responsible for overpayments of state funds by states for which SSA administers State supplements concurrently with Federal benefits. The Food Stamp program uses an error-rate threshold of 9 percent for fiscal year (FY) 1983, 7 percent for FY 1984, and 5 percent for FY 1985. The AFDC program uses a threshold of 4 percent for FY 1983 and 3 percent for FY 1984 and thereafter. The SSI program has used a threshold of 4 percent since 1980. For the SSI and AFDC programs, calculation of sanctions involves multiplying the amount of program benefits by the extent the actual error rate exceeds the threshold. For the Food Stamp program, sanctions are based on the amount of a state's federally reimbursed administrative costs. Waivers of sanctions are possible under the Food Stamp and AFDC programs but not under the SSI program. GAO found that SSA and the Department of Agriculture, which administers the Food Stamp program, have made extensive use of this authority to eliminate state liability.

124037

[Observations on the National School Lunch Program's Assessment, Improvement, and Monitoring System]. September 7, 1983. 9 pp. *Report to Robert E. Leard, Administrator, Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; by Stanley S. Sargol, Group Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Issue Area: Food: Improvement of the Effectiveness and Integrity of Child Nutrition Programs (1745).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Education and Labor: Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 1758).

Abstract: GAO conducted a survey to obtain information on the operation of the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Assessment, Improvement, and Monitoring System which was implemented under interim regulations which established four standards to improve the management of the National School Lunch Program and ensure correct claims for federal program reimbursement. These standards provided that: (1) applications must be correctly approved or denied; (2) the number of meals claimed by each school must be no more than the number of children correctly approved in each school; (3) school recording systems must yield correct claims for reimbursement; and (4) meals must provide the required food components. **Findings/Conclusions:** In the four states which GAO visited, GAO found that the local school food authorities failed to meet the first performance standard because they had more than the 10-percent error tolerance level allowed for invalid applications. In addition, GAO found that the followup review requirements for schools found to be not in compliance may be too lenient. Schools may not meet a performance standard and not be subject to another review for years. GAO found that none of the four states elected to require restitution for inaccurate meal counts on the basis of initial reviews, even though restitution is required. GAO found the second performance standard to be overly lenient as a measure of whether free and reduced-price lunch counts were excessive. In addition, GAO found that the third standard was not consistently applied. Furthermore, GAO found that the fourth performance standard does not ensure that the quantities served to each student comply with the regulations. Finally, GAO found that there is a need for a performance standard covering verification of information on applications, since ineligible children receive free meals because of inaccurate reporting of family income or size. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should consider requiring states to take financial action against school food authorities that do not meet the first performance standard, perhaps based on a sliding scale depending upon the extent to which the percent or number of invalid applications exceeds the tolerance set. The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should consider setting a lower tolerance for the first performance standard, because the 10-percent tolerance seems high compared with error-rate tolerances established for the Food Stamp Program. The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should reexamine the adequacy of the 25-percent requirement for followup reviews. The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should consider requiring restitution from school food authorities that do not meet Assessment, Improvement, and Monitoring System standards on an initial review. The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should require that efforts be made to develop better ways to judge whether meal counts are excessive. The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should consider requiring states to test meal counts under the third performance standard to provide a better degree of assurance that school food authority reimbursement claims are accurate. In addition, he should provide states additional guidance on what amount of restitution should be required when schools do not have, or use, an approved system for counting meals served. The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should require that the needed guidance for monitoring the requirement that minimum quantities of various types of food be served to qualify for federal reimbursement be developed and provided to the states as long as Service

regulations continue the requirement, and that compliance with the requirement be made a part of the Assessment, Improvement, and Monitoring System. The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service should develop an additional Assessment, Improvement, and Monitoring System standard for monitoring school food authority compliance with the new program requirement that state agencies verify 3 percent or 3,000, whichever is less, of a school food authority's approved applications for free or reduced-price school meals.

124040

[Initial Findings From an Evaluation of the 1981 AFDC Changes]. May 2, 1984. 9 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelmsky, Director, GAO Program Evaluation and Methodology Division

Refer to PEMD-84-6, April 2, 1984, Accession Number 123783.

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Abstract: GAO discussed changes to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. GAO found that there were major reductions in national AFDC caseloads and outlays. In addition, GAO found that most working recipients in five large cities who lost AFDC due to changes in the act did not quit their jobs nor did they return to the AFDC rolls by the fall of 1983. However, these families experienced substantial income losses on the average and many were without public or private health insurance.

124071

[U.S. Economic Assistance to Central America]. NSIAD-84-71; B-214457. March 8, 1984. 2 pp. plus 1 enclosure (8 pp.).

Report to Rep. Michael D. Barnes, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee; *Rep.* Michael D. Barnes.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on economic assistance to Central America. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO provided statistical data and reported on Agency for International Development procedures for; (1) controlling dollars provided for balance-of-payments support through cash transfers; (2) monitoring and controlling local currencies generated by cash transfers and concessional food sales; and (3) implementing developmental assistance projects.

124158

Food Bibliography. RCED-84-130. April 1984. 213 pp.

by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food (1700).

Food Bibliography

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Abstract: This bibliography includes information on documents directly or indirectly related to food, agriculture, and nutrition that have been released by GAO between January 1981 and December 1983. The documents included are representative of the broad interrelationship which exists between the food area and other issue areas of concern to GAO such as health, transportation, energy, defense, and international affairs.

124243

[Protest of DPSC Contract Award to Any Foreign Firms]. B-215110. May 24, 1984. 2 pp.

Decision re. Hygenic Corp.; by Harry R. Van Cleve, Acting General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Defense Logistics Agency: Defense Personnel Support Center; Hygenic Corp.

Authority: Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 10a et seq.). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). 61 Comp. Gen. 431. B-188342 (1977). B-202407 (1981).

Abstract: A firm protested a contract award to any foreign firms under a solicitation issued by the Defense Personnel Support Center. The protester contended that the specifications of the solicitation placed domestic concerns at a competitive disadvantage and should be revised to restrict competition to firms approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is the responsibility of the contracting agency, not GAO, to determine what products will satisfy an agency's minimum needs. GAO will not consider a complaint that a more restrictive solicitation should be used unless there is a showing of possible fraud or intentional misconduct on the part of procuring officials. Since neither of these exceptions was alleged in this case, GAO would not intervene to require the use of a more restrictive solicitation. Furthermore, exclusion from competition of foreign firms not subject to FDA approval is not consistent with the Buy American Act. Finally, the alleged competitive unfairness perceived by the protester is inherent in all competition that includes foreign firms. Accordingly, the protest was dismissed.

124258

[ASCS Needs Better Information To Adequately Assess Proposed County and State Office Automation]. IMTEC-84-11; B-214903. May 25, 1984. 9 pp. plus 1 enclosure (3 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, by Warren G. Reed, Director, GAO Information Management and Technology Division.

Issue Area: Automatic Data Processing: Improving How Agencies Satisfy Their Software Requirements (0116).

Contact: Information Management and Technology Division.

Budget Function: Automatic Data Processing (990.1).

Organization Concerned: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Abstract: GAO examined the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's (ASCS) cost-benefit analysis to determine whether ASCS adequately justified the automation of its state and county offices. **Findings/Conclusions:** Before automating the

state and county offices that administer ASCS commodity and land use programs, ASCS tested the idea in seven county offices. The ASCS cost-benefit analysis shows greater estimated benefits than costs. GAO determined that the ASCS analysis may be overly optimistic. GAO found that the estimates are uncertain because ASCS relied on judgment rather than historical data to project many costs and benefits, and available evidence does not support some of the projections. Most of the estimated benefits are based on projections of saved staff time and improved accuracy. Further, the accuracy improvement is not substantiated by evidence, and other benefits are overstated. Estimated costs for equipment and maintenance appear to have been understated. Finally, ASCS plans to use untested technology for the implementation phase, which increases the risk of unforeseen expenses. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct ASCS to proceed with the prototype project in three states and defer the planned nationwide automation of state and county offices until the prototype has provided credible cost-benefit information and tested the technology.

124296

The Management System for Identifying and Correcting Problems in the Food Stamp Program Can Work Better. RCED-84-94; B-214899. May 30, 1984. 38 pp. plus 3 appendices (20 pp.). Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security, Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1964. Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-253).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the corrective action process used by the Food and Nutrition Service to encourage states to solve Food Stamp Program problems. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the Service has taken some actions to help states develop and implement corrective action plans. However, the Service regions had approved some state plans which did not cover all major problems or which proposed corrective actions which were inadequate for solving the problems that were identified. In addition, the Service and the states did not always analyze and summarize all available data to ensure that all identified problems were being addressed in the plans. Of five states reviewed, only one had developed corrective actions for solving most major problems. GAO found that even when corrective action plans included major problems, the planned solutions were not always adequate. Furthermore, because states and Service regional offices failed to analyze and summarize the results of local program evaluations, they were unaware of some problems which needed to be addressed. In addition, the Service did not ensure that states' plans were carried out in a timely manner or that the states monitored the effectiveness of planned actions. Three of the five states reviewed had inadequate procedures for monitoring corrective actions or improperly used such procedures. GAO

also found that regional offices lacked clear-cut criteria for determining when to warn states that federal funds might be withheld due to errors. Finally, GAO found that Service requirements for state management evaluations of local program operations were burdensome and did not cover all recent program changes. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to revise Service regulations to expand the definition of what constitutes a major program weakness that must be included in state corrective action plans. Dollar losses or the percent of affected cases could be a better benchmark in some situations than the number or percent of project areas involved, which is the present criterion. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to notify Service regional offices and states that corrective action plans should be comprehensive. All major problems should be included in the plans, and proposed solutions should be sufficient to eliminate or substantially reduce the identified problems. Target dates for initiating and completing planned actions should reflect the relative priority for solving each problem. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to obtain and review all state management evaluation reports and the states' analysis of those reports to make sure that states do not omit major problems from their corrective action plans. Doing this should ensure that states follow regulation requirements to analyze results of management evaluations to identify problems that should be addressed in state plans. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to assist states to do the amount and type of analysis of program information needed to develop effective corrective action plans. One option might be to extend the Mid-Atlantic Region's error rate reduction analysis and research system to other Service regions and to expand that initiative to include the results of management evaluation reviews as well as quality control reviews. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to analyze at the headquarters level all approved state corrective action plans. Such analyses could give the Service a national perspective on the adequacy of state corrective action plans, offer ideas for further technical assistance, and provide Service headquarters with the information needed to evaluate and guide regional approval of corrective action plans. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to notify the states that corrective actions are to be implemented in accordance with approved dates. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service to make sure that states adequately monitor and evaluate corrective actions as required by Service regulations. For particularly serious problems, the Service should consider requiring states to send it periodic status reports on actions not yet completed. States not having adequate monitoring and evaluation techniques should be required to include these as problems in their corrective action plans and correct them just as they would any other program problems. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to develop and issue policy guidance to regions on when to use the formal warning process. The policy guidance should include a list of the most appropriate program problems which the Service believes should be subject to this process. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to use the formal sanction warning process as needed to improve states' administration of the corrective action process. It could be used to encourage states to develop comprehensive plans, carry them out in an effective and timely manner, and monitor and evaluate progress toward eliminating or substantially reducing major problems. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to withhold approval of any state requests for establishing management units for review purposes which would materially reduce a state's ability to identify

statewide problems. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, to revise regulations and manuals to streamline and restructure management evaluation requirements and update review coverage. This guidance should help states target their management evaluations on those program areas needing the most attention while ensuring adequate review coverage and consistent review efforts among the states. The Service should, as part of this revision to regulations and manuals, add any review requirements originating from legislative changes adopted since 1980 when the most recent regulations and handbooks were issued.

124425

EPA's Efforts To Clean Up Three Hazardous Waste Sites. RCED-84-91, B-214226. June 7, 1984. Released June 14, 1984. 16 pp. Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Federal and State Programs in Reducing the Environmental and Health Dangers Posed by Hazardous and Solid Wastes (2221).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Rep. James J. Florio.

Authority: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the status of cleanup efforts at three hazardous waste sites, provided information on progress at the sites, and discussed the lack of cost-effectiveness evaluations for remedial measures by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, since 1980, cleanup actions have taken place at the three sites, and studies are underway to determine how to complete the tasks. Although the Superfund program provides that the long-term remedies be cost effective, no standards exist as to the extent of the required cleanup. Specifically, at the Laskin/Poplar Oil Company site in Ohio, EPA has disposed of contaminated oil and water. At the LiPari Landfill site in New Jersey, EPA has constructed an underground containment wall and, at the Picillo Farm site in Rhode Island, EPA has instituted a number of cleanup strategies. However, EPA has indicated that total cleanup of the LiPari site may not be practical because contaminants continue to leak from underground containment into ground and surface waters. GAO expressed concern that standards for cost-effective cleanup have not been developed and noted that an Office of Technology Assessment study is examining the extent to which the absence of specific national standard affects the selection of cleanup technologies and whether sufficient data exist to develop such standards.

124432

[Peruvian Rice Purchases Guaranteed by the Commodity Credit Corporation]. NSIAD-84-116; B-215225. June 7, 1984. Released June 11, 1984. 7 pp.

Report to Rep. John B. Breaux; by Bill W. Thurman, (for Frank C. Conahan, Director), GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Effectiveness of U.S. Government Export Stimulation Programs (0620).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1); International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corp.; Republic of Peru

Congressional Relevance: Rep. John B. Breaux.

Authority: Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714c(f)). 7 C.F.R. 1493. P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO investigated rice purchases made by Peru in September 1983 under a U.S. Government guaranteed export credit, focusing on: (1) whether Peru passed up lower responsive bids during the procurement of the rice; and (2) what is required of recipient countries and the Department of Agriculture under Export Credit Guarantee Program legislation and implementing regulations. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that Peruvian officials: (1) had passed over two lots of lower priced rice from one offerer to purchase an equivalent amount of rice from other exporters at a premium of over \$300,000; and (2) decided to split the purchase among several suppliers either because of the low offerer's deficient service on a prior purchase or to achieve supply security. Agriculture's Export Credit Guarantee Program is not administered under any specific underlying legislation, and regulations for the program impose no restrictions on the purchasing terms and conditions that a buying country can employ nor do they provide for Agriculture to have access to the importers' records. Agriculture officials stated that the importers, often private or quasi-private entities, should be able to choose which commodities to purchase since they must repay amounts borrowed to commercial banks within 3 years and, since the program is considered a commercial sales program, regulations do not require competitive bidding or the acceptance of lowest priced offers. GAO stated that implementing regulations similar to those governing the Public Law 480 concessional sales program would not necessarily eliminate the type of situation that occurred in Peru, and importing countries might be reluctant to subject themselves to tighter controls which could affect U.S. export levels.

124476

Importance and Impact of Federal Alcohol Fuel Tax Incentives. RCED-84-1; B-214580. June 6, 1984. 58 pp. plus 4 appendices (11 pp.).

Report to Sen. Charles H. Percy; Sen. J. James Exon; Sen. David Durenberger; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Energy: Conservation and Renewable Financial Incentives (1610); Economic Analysis of Alternative Program Approaches: Impact of Tax Provisions on Economic Stabilization and Growth (4055).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Energy: Energy Supply (271.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Energy; Department of the Treasury; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. J. James Exon; Sen. David Durenberger; Sen. Charles H. Percy.

Authority: Clean Air Act. Energy Tax Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-618). Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-223). Highway Revenue Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-424). Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-499). 40 C.F.R. 80.20. General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, October 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed issues related to the Federal alcohol fuel tax incentives. Specifically, GAO addressed the importance of Federal tax incentives to the ethanol industry and the impact

of the production of ethanol on agriculture, the Federal budget, international trade, national energy security, and other energy industries. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that Federal tax incentives have been vital to the establishment and development of the domestic fuel ethanol industry and, without a subsidy, ethanol could not compete with current gasoline prices and would not be used as a fuel. GAO determined that the ethanol industry has had only a modest impact on the domestic economy, international trade balance, and national energy security. Stockpiling ethanol fuel could reduce U.S. vulnerability to an oil supply disruption. However, GAO questioned the cost effectiveness of stockpiling ethanol fuel. In addition, GAO found that the total value of tax subsidies received by conventional oil and gas industries has historically been much greater than that received by the fuel ethanol industry and other alternative energy sources. Since the conventional fuel industries benefit from these tax subsidies, GAO believes that to withdraw support for the fuel ethanol industry would be inconsistent. GAO determined that continuing the tax incentives until their scheduled expiration date in 1992 would be appropriate because the private sector has invested considerably in fuel ethanol plants with the expectation that the market for the fuel would continue until 1992. GAO concluded that increasing the tax incentives could not be justified because combined Federal and State incentives are adequate to make ethanol competitive and suggested that the incentives be reviewed periodically.

124477

Agriculture's First-Year Implementation of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act. RCED-84-138; B-202205. June 21, 1984. 4 pp. plus 3 appendices (38 pp.)

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Accounting and Financial Reporting: Financial Integrity Act Reviews (2815).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Authority: Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) implementation of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that USDA has made progress toward improving its internal controls. Many USDA agencies have completed vulnerability assessments and have taken steps to improve internal controls by correcting weaknesses and conducting internal control reviews. GAO found some weaknesses in the USDA internal control program; agency reports do not always follow Federal guidelines and are not reviewed for compliance with such guidelines. In addition, USDA does not adequately address internal controls for automatic data processing. GAO also found that USDA does not perform in-depth accounting system compliance evaluations or determine whether accounting systems were operating in accordance with Federal standards.

124494

[The Role of the U.S. Tea Examiner Office in Procurement of Tea by the Department of Defense]. NSIAD-84-126; B-197854. June 22, 1984. 6 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Report to Sen. Lowell P. Weicker, Chairman, Senate Committee on Small Business; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: General Procurement: Improving Contract Administration (1933).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: National Defense: Department of Defense - Procurement and Contracts (051 2).

Organization Concerned: United States Tea Examiner's Office; Defense Logistics Agency; Defense Personnel Support Center.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Small Business; Sen. Lowell P. Weicker.

Authority: Tea Importation Act. B-197854 2 (1980).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the functions of the U.S. Tea Examiner's Office, focusing on: (1) the practices used to test teas obtained under Department of Defense (DOD) contracts; and (2) allegations that the Office discriminates against small businesses. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the procedures used to test teas procured for DOD have been in effect for more than 30 years and are undertaken at a nominal cost by the Office. GAO found no evidence to suggest that the testing favored any type of tea firm, but believes that the testing process would be improved if the Office: (1) implemented a blind testing process; and (2) used an ad hoc panel of tea experts in the appeals process.

124605

[HHS Needs To Determine If Massachusetts' AFDC Program Meets Federal Requirements and, If Not, Take Compliance Action]. HRD-84-8; B-215564. July 9, 1984. 6 pp. plus 6 enclosures (21 pp.).

Report to Margaret M. Heckler, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Efficient Administration and Quality of Service of Needs-Based Cash Assistance Programs (1332); Automatic Data Processing. Effectiveness of the Management of Automated Information Resources Used in Support of Agency Missions (0118).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Massachusetts: Department of Public Welfare.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations; Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; House Committee on Ways and Means; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Finance.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). Refugee Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-212). 45 C.F.R. 201.6(a)(2).

Abstract: GAO discussed its findings regarding the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare's administration of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the department made erroneous AFDC payments in 1981, 1982, and 1983 and that the federal share of these payments was over \$3 million. In 1981, the department: (1) made estimated payments of \$168,000 to ineligible AFDC dependents aged 18 through 20 who were not regularly attending school and to refugees for whom reimbursements were claimed under the Refugee Act beyond the act's 3-year payment limit; (2) made estimated AFDC payments of \$240,000 to ineligible dependents aged 21 years or older and took an average of more than 6 months to adjust benefits after these dependents became ineligible; and (3) recorded an estimated 61 percent of the dependents' eligible status incorrectly in the automated welfare files. From February 1982 to August 1983, the department experienced related problems in implementing federal requirements and made erroneous payments of which the federal share was \$2.8 million. GAO found that the department has

experienced substantial data problems in its automated welfare files such as erroneous or missing social security numbers and incorrect information about dependents' status. Further, there is no provision for automated cross-referencing between the separate files maintained on recipients and dependents, and there is no tracking system to ensure that caseworkers follow through to update case files. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to ascertain whether the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare has taken effective action to validate and correct AFDC dependent case information in its automated welfare master files. The Secretary, HHS, should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to ascertain whether the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare has taken effective action to record U.S. entry dates for all refugee recipients and dependents in its automated welfare master files. The Secretary, HHS, should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to ascertain whether the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare has taken effective action to develop, for those cases identified as requiring changes, a tracking system to ensure that caseworkers follow through in making the changes. The Secretary, HHS, should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to ascertain whether the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare has taken effective action to emphasize that field offices act to remove ineligible dependents from cases, adjust benefits accordingly, and otherwise improve case maintenance activities. If it is determined that effective actions have not been taken, the Secretary, HHS, should direct the Commissioner of Social Security to take compliance action against the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare to withhold federal financial participation for failure of the state in practice to comply with federal requirements.

124610

EPA's Efforts To Identify and Control Harmful Chemicals in Use. RCED-84-100; B-214926. June 13, 1984. Released July 10, 1984. 55 pp. plus 1 appendix (3 pp.).

Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Sen. Robert T. Stafford, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; Sen. Jennings Randolph, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Internal Auditing Systems (0200); Intergovernmental Policies and Fiscal Relations (0400).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0)

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; Congress; Rep. James J. Florio; Sen. Jennings Randolph; Sen. Robert T. Stafford.

Authority: Toxic Substances Control Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) current progress in reviewing and controlling existing chemicals as mandated under the Toxic Substances Control Act. **Findings/Conclusions:** Since 1982, EPA has begun to make progress in implementing the existing chemicals program by establishing a process for identifying, assessing, and controlling existing chemical hazards.

However, the chemicals program has had low priority in relation to other activities and, since fiscal year 1981, there has been a downward trend in funding for the program. EPA has begun to make progress in implementing the existing chemicals program by establishing a process for identifying, assessing, and controlling existing chemical hazards, developing a plan for implementing the program, and establishing an existing chemicals task force to develop, monitor, and manage the program. Since the act's passage, EPA has: (1) regulated 4 chemicals; (2) identified 60 chemicals that may present an unreasonable risk and need to be evaluated, and (3) determined that 41 additional chemicals require testing. Initially, EPA did not meet the act's mandate to initiate chemical test rulemaking proceedings within 1 year because of a lack of resources, and it had not proposed test rules. Finally, EPA has designated and assessed only two chemicals for 180-day priority review because they were determined to be a significant risk of harm from cancer, birth defects, or gene mutations. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress may want to consider alternatives for increasing the number of chemicals considered for priority review, if Congress believes that EPA should use this provision more frequently. Congress could (1) require EPA to designate chemicals which are known to cause cancer, gene mutations, or birth defects, (2) establish an advisory group of representatives from federal research and regulatory agencies to recommend chemicals for EPA to consider for priority review; (3) provide EPA the authority to gather additional information to properly assess a chemical's risk during review; or (4) require EPA to include in its annual reports the chemicals it considered for priority review, its decisions, and the related reasons for the decisions. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator, EPA, should finalize proposed test rulemaking within a reasonable time, such as a goal of 12 to 18 months after proposal. If EPA is not able to finalize test rules in a reasonable time, it should inform Congress of the delay, the reasons, and suggest solutions such as negotiated testing agreements, additional resources, or legislative changes.

124629

Assessment of New Chemical Regulation Under the Toxic Substances Control Act. RCED-84-84; B-214392. June 15, 1984. Released July 10, 1984. 46 pp. plus 3 appendices (7 pp.).

Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Sen. David Durenberger, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Improvement of the Regulation of Dangerous Pesticides and Chemicals (2225).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0), Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0)

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; European Economic Community.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce; House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Inter-American Affairs Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; Congress; Rep. James J. Florio; Sen. David Durenberger.

Authority: Toxic Substances Control Act

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed: (1) the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) program for pro-

testing health and the environment from the risks of new chemicals; (2) enforcement of program requirements by EPA; and (3) the differences between the EPA program and the new chemicals notification program adopted by the European Economic Community (EEC) and the potential impact of these differences on international trade. *Findings/Conclusions:* EPA performs premanufacture reviews to assess the potential risks of new chemicals. GAO found that the EPA reviews are limited in scope and that their assessment of risks are frequently made with considerable uncertainty as to the toxicity of the chemicals being reviewed. EPA is required to provide enforcement inspections to ensure that: (1) new chemical notifications are being submitted; (2) EPA-imposed control actions are implemented by chemical manufacturers; and (3) data required to be submitted are reliable. GAO found that not all of the planned inspections were performed because inspection resources were being diverted to other enforcement activities. In addition, GAO found that the United States and EEC have pursued different approaches to chemicals regulation. While the American system is designed to protect against chemical risks without creating economic barriers to technological innovation, the European program is designed to avoid trade barriers that might arise if the nations of EEC did not standardize their reporting requirements. The EEC program involves a notification system, with risk assessment and control decisions left primarily to member nations. Under the EEC program: (1) a standardized set of tests is required for new chemicals; (2) any chemical not on the established chemical inventory must be pretested; and (3) additional testing is required when the quantity of a new chemical being marketed reaches specified levels. GAO believes that it is too early to tell whether international trade might be affected by the differences in the two systems. *Recommendation To Congress:* Congress may wish to provide EPA with additional authority to control changes in manufacture and use of new chemicals that have undergone premanufacture review while data necessary for determining the chemical's health and environmental effects are being developed. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Administrator, EPA, should establish monitoring procedures and reporting requirements for new chemicals that have undergone an EPA premanufacture notification review and have been added to the inventory of existing chemicals. Specifically, EPA should require: (1) premanufacture notification submitters to notify EPA of any significant changes in the manufacture and use of the substance described in their submission; and (2) subsequent manufacturers to notify EPA when they begin to manufacture the new substance and provide information on production volume and uses of the substance. To improve the enforceability of the new chemicals program, the Administrator, EPA, should revise the premanufacture notification regulations on what constitutes an exemption from the notification requirement by developing more specific criteria for distinguishing between research and development, test marketing, and commercial uses. EPA should provide adequate inspection resources to achieve its inspection goals in the new chemicals program. If these resources are not available because of higher priority requirements, EPA should establish the additional needs of the program and provide such information to the appropriate congressional committees for their consideration.

124646

Problems in Protecting Consumers From Illegally Harvested Shellfish (Clams, Mussels, and Oysters). HRD-84-36; B-215245. June 14, 1984. Released July 13, 1984. 21 pp. plus 7 appendices (30 pp.). Report to Rep. Thomas J. Downey; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921);

Food: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Food Quality Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741).

Contact: Human Resources Division

Budget Function: Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Thomas J. Downey

Authority: Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 241). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301). Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3371). Coastal Zone Management Act Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94-370).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) administration of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, focusing on whether: (1) FDA has adequate legal authority to enforce federal standards designed to ensure the safety and quality of shellfish; (2) FDA is effective in regulating the shellfish industry; or (3) a stronger or different federal role is needed to regulate shellfish. *Findings/Conclusions:* GAO found that, although FDA, state enforcement authorities, and the shellfish industry have been working to improve the sanitary quality of shellfish shipped in interstate commerce, problems still need to be overcome. These problems are as follows: (1) the National Shellfish Sanitation Program is voluntary, and FDA cannot ensure that members are adhering to program requirements; (2) according to state officials, law enforcement agencies do not have sufficient staff or equipment to adequately enforce shellfish program requirements or patrol areas closed to shellfish harvesting; (3) fines assessed by the courts for illegal harvesting have generally been so low that they have had little deterrent effect; (4) some growing areas and surrounding properties have not been adequately inspected; and (5) contaminated shellfish often cannot be traced back to the growing areas from which they were harvested and the persons who harvested them. GAO also determined that there are different alternatives for regulating the shellfish industry, including: (1) leaving regulatory authority with the states and allowing FDA to continue to function in an advisory capacity; (2) granting specific regulatory authority to FDA to administer the shellfish program; and (3) forming a cooperative relationship among the states, FDA, and the shellfish industry in which each party has a voice in the direction and regulation of shellfish and specific duties and responsibilities.

124697

Central American Refugees: Regional Conditions and Prospects and Potential Impact on the United States. NSIAD-84-106; B-215044. July 20, 1984. 39 pp. plus 5 appendices (17 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs: Effective Management of Refugee Assistance and Disaster Relief (0633).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: United Nations: Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; Department of State; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Justice; Mexico.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, Jan. 31, 1967, Multilateral, 19 U.S.T. 6223. Convention Fixing the Rules To Be Observed in Granting Asylum, Feb. 20, 1928, Multilateral, 132 L.N.T.S. 323. Convention on Territorial Asylum, Mar. 28, 1954, Multilateral. Convention on Political Asylum, Dec. 26, 1933, Multilateral.

Abstract: GAO evaluated the adequacy and management of refugee assistance programs in Central America and Mexico, focusing on: (1) the programs' relationship to the migration of Central Americans to the United States; (2) refugee and immigration policies of asylum country governments; and (3) the potential impact on the United States of continuing immigration of large numbers of Central Americans. **Findings/Conclusions:** Most U.S. funds for Central American refugee assistance are channeled through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). GAO found that about one-fourth of the 322,000 Central American refugees are receiving assistance and that the basic needs of most refugees who receive assistance are being met. GAO could not determine whether refugees encamped in Mexico were being adequately assisted because of Mexican government policies restricting access to refugee settlements. While conditions at refugee camps are improving, resettlement opportunities for refugees are limited by asylum country policies and UNHCR program restrictions. Refugees from El Salvador have particular problems; of an estimated 200,000 people who have fled that country in recent years, only 31,000 are receiving assistance in Central American countries, and UNHCR believes that continued strife in El Salvador will cause many more people to flee. GAO also found that the U.S. Government cannot determine the: (1) number of Central Americans entering the country; or (2) social impact of large numbers of Central American refugees or illegal immigrants entering the country. However, plans are being developed to cope with large numbers of Central Americans entering the country illegally.

124780

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's Efforts To Provide Monthly Reports to the Senate Committee on Appropriations. RCED-84-169; B-214525. July 13, 1984. 14 pp. plus 4 appendices (5 pp.).

Report to Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food. Improvement of the Food Marketing and Distribution Process (1716)

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton.

Authority: Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.). S Rept. 97-566. S. Rept. 98-160

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the methodology which the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) used in developing data for required monthly congressional reports on producer participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program, the rate at which policies are cancelled, and any marketing or significant administrative changes that affect the program's cost. In addition, GAO reviewed the monthly reports to determine their accuracy. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that FCIC has often changed its methodology for preparing the monthly reports and the type of data reported. Furthermore, it has: (1) not reported accurately its actual business but has instead reported a combination of actual and estimated business; (2) either not reported information for its reinsured companies' business or presented information not comparable to the information presented for its master marketer business; (3) based its anticipated program participation on estimates or on funds

appropriated by Congress; and (4) not reported marketing and administrative changes that affect program costs. As a result, the reports have been incomplete, have lacked continuity, and have generally overstated program participation. Information is available to FCIC that would provide Congress with an adequate basis for month-to-month comparisons of FCIC business. However, further clarification by Congress is needed on such issues as reporting estimated versus actual figures, pertinent marketing, and significant administrative changes that affect program costs.

124789

[An Analysis of Proposed Formulas for the Home and Community Based Services Block Grant Program]. HRD-84-83; B-214417. July 31, 1984. 8 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).

Report to Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce Health and the Environment Subcommittee, by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Intergovernmental Policies and Fiscal Relations: Identifying Improvements in Federal Aid for Formulas To Achieve More Equitable Fund Distribution (0409).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Health Care Services (551.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Henry A. Waxman

Authority: S. 2301 (98th Cong.)

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the formulas proposed by S. 2301 designed to allocate federal funds under the home and community-based services block grant program. Specifically, GAO discussed options that would target federal funds based on measures of the elderly poor and near poor and considered alternative methods of providing minimum state allotments. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO identified three alternative measures of the needy population for consideration in the formula: (1) the total number of elderly, including poor and non-poor; (2) the total number of elderly, adjusted for state differences in the proportion of elderly residents; and (3) the number of elderly poor and near poor. GAO found that the bill's plan to allocate funds to states based on their proportion of elderly residents penalizes those states with relatively young populations and favors states with old populations. Also, the proposed minimum allotment formula provides more funding to states with small elderly populations. GAO concluded that it is difficult to select a measure because the block grant program does not explicitly define eligibility criteria. Therefore, it is a matter of judgment as to which measure is most appropriate for individual programs.

124800

[Query Concerning Secretary of Agriculture's Obligation to Change CCC Procedures for Charging Interest and Crediting Loan Repayments]. B-213761. July 27, 1984. 17 pp.

Letter to Rep. Thomas E. Petri, by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Authority: Food and Agriculture Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98; 95 Stat. 1266). No Net Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-218; 7 U.S.C. 1445; 96 Stat. 197). Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-180; 97 Stat. 1128). P.L. 98-59. *Erlendaugh v. United States*, 409 U.S. 239 (1972). *Allen v. Grand Central Aircraft Co.*, 347 U.S. 535 (1954). *United States v.*

Stewart, 311 U.S. 60 (1940). H. Rept. 97-613. H. R. 6590 (97th Cong.). H. R. 3392 (97th Cong.). 127 Cong. Rec. H7552. 128 Cong. Rec. S8192. 128 Cong. Rec. H3687. 128 Cong. Rec. S8290. 128 Cong. Rec. S8224. 128 Cong. Rec. S8228. 129 Cong. Rec. S9780. 129 Cong. Rec. S13724. 97 Stat. 296.

Abstract: GAO considered whether the Secretary of Agriculture is legally required to change the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) procedures for charging interest and crediting loan repayments to make them consistent with the procedures used by the Department of the Treasury. GAO noted that, although the agency is not legally required to change its procedures, modifying them to conform with those followed on Treasury loans would further legislative intent to avoid interest losses.

124842

[Assessment of the Adequacy of the EPA Indemnification Study Required by Section 25(a) of the Toxic Substances Control Act]. RCED-84-170; B-203051. August 3, 1984. 5 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).
Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsheer, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Environmental Protection Programs: Improvement of the Regulation of Dangerous Pesticides and Chemicals (2225).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2624). 31 U.S.C. 1304.

Abstract: Pursuant to a legislative requirement, GAO reported on the adequacy of a study by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of whether and under what conditions indemnification should be accorded any person as a result of EPA actions under federal law. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, because of delays and difficulties in conducting the study, EPA did not submit it to Congress until 5 years after it was due. GAO also found that the study provided a comprehensive examination of the legal and policy issues involved in indemnification and provided an adequate framework to assist Congress in deciding whether EPA needs new indemnification programs. GAO believes that the study adequately satisfied the requirements of the Toxic Substances Control Act. GAO advised Congress that it is reviewing indemnification under the Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

124886

[Federal Fuel Ethanol Tax Incentives]. August 14, 1984. 8 pp.
Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee, House Committee on Science and Technology: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; by Donald Z. Forcier, Senior Group Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Science and Technology: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee.

Authority: Deficit Reduction Act of 1984. Clean Air Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed tax incentives to promote the development of the domestic fuel ethanol industry. Gasohol, a blend of ethanol and gasoline, is partially exempt from the federal gasoline excise tax. In addition, many states provide exemptions for

gasohol from state excise taxes. GAO noted that the fuel ethanol industry appears to be dependent on tax incentives because of the disparity between the prices of gasoline and gasohol. While technological advances could decrease the cost of ethanol production, it is believed that such reductions will be marginal if corn remains the primary feedstock for ethanol production. However, there is some likelihood that demand will increase for ethanol as a component of high octane gasoline. GAO also noted that the fuel ethanol industry has had a limited impact on the economy because the demand for gasohol as a percentage of total demand for gasoline is very small. However, GAO estimated that demand for fuel ethanol caused slight increases in farm income and the national average price of corn and decreased the national average price of soybeans. GAO stated that effects on local markets around ethanol plants can be more dramatic. Finally, GAO noted that the overall impact of the fuel ethanol industry on oil imports has been very small, also because the industry's output represents a small fraction of total gasoline demand.

124889

[Graying of the National Budget: The Year 2020]. August 13, 1984. 22 pp. plus 1 enclosure (1 p.).
Speech before the 1984 Joint Statistical Meetings; by William F. Laurie, GAO Field Operations Division: Regional Office (Detroit); Patrick A. Iler, GAO Field Operations Division: Regional Office (Detroit).

Contact: Field Operations Division: Regional Office (Detroit).

Abstract: Two members of the staff of the GAO Detroit Regional Office presented their views on the aging of the U.S. population. The authors stated that (1) the increased number of elderly people in the United States impacts on income security, health care, and veterans' benefit programs, and (2) by the year 2020, 16 percent of the U.S. population will be 65 years of age or older. With respect to the impact on the budget of these trends, the authors noted that (1) by 2020, income security programs will account for about 36 percent of federal expenditures; (2) by 2020, health care programs will account for about 11 percent of federal expenditures; and (3) spending for veterans' benefits should remain stable as a percentage of total federal expenditures.

124906

Department of Agriculture Is Using Improved Payment Procedures for Its 1984 Farm Programs. RCED-84-159; B-215571. August 6, 1984. Released August 13, 1984. 5 pp. plus 3 appendices (24 pp.).
Report to Rep. Berkley W. Bedell, by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Berkley W. Bedell.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined whether: (1) Department of Agriculture (USDA) procedures for 1983 farm programs allow a farmer to receive payments based on the average yields of land rather than on the yield of the land actually set aside; (2) individual farmers received payments beyond the production capability of the land actually set aside; and (3) there are any cost-effective administrative remedies available to USDA which would preclude farm payments that do not reflect the actual yield capability of the land set aside.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that USDA procedures allow farmers to receive program payments for corn, wheat, and sorghum based on average yields of land. However, some lower yielding dry land which is set aside receives payment on the basis of higher yielding irrigated land. With respect to rice and cotton crops, payments are based on historical yields. Overall, farmers receive payments for corn, wheat, and sorghum based on average and irrigated crop yields that would have been lower if the payments were based on the expected yield of the land actually set aside. USDA could have lowered its payment amounts; however, GAO did find instances where payments to individual farmers would have been larger if based on land actually set aside. This occurred when farmers chose to set aside higher yielding irrigable land but were paid on the basis of lower yielding dry land. GAO found that there are administrative remedies available to USDA and that USDA has already taken remedial action to prevent future payments on the basis of average or irrigated yields. The revised procedures will make use of existing data and procedures already available at the county level so that no significant amount of additional work or costs is involved. In view of this, GAO believes that the USDA action will be cost effective.

124941

[Evaluation of the Quality of Corn Stored by USDA at a Plainview, TX, Grain Warehouse]. RCED-84-175; B-215752. August 17, 1984. 5 pp. plus 4 appendices (15 pp.).

Report to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Adequacy of Farm Programs Directed Toward Maintaining Farm Productivity (1738).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture. Commodity Credit Corp., PLB Grain Storage Corp.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza.

Authority: 31 U.S.C. 716(b)

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO investigated reports that significant quantities of corn owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and stored in commercial warehouses in Texas had seriously deteriorated. **Findings/Conclusions:** The GAO review focused on one particular warehouse in Texas where about 22 million bushels of CCC-owned corn have been stored since 1980. Analyses performed in November 1983 and in February 1984 revealed that the quality of the CCC-owned corn stored at the warehouse had not deteriorated beyond what would normally be expected over a period of almost 4 years. GAO found no basis for questioning the usefulness of the stored corn for making payments under the payment-in-kind (PIK) program or for feeding livestock. Officials stated that they were not aware of any complaints about the quality of the corn which the warehouse had supplied for the PIK program.

125068

[Evaluation of Selected Aspects of FDA's Food Manufacturing Sanitation Inspection Efforts]. HRD-84-65; B-211342. August 30, 1984. Released September 4, 1984. 12 pp. plus 5 enclosures (15 pp.).

Report to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by Philip A. Bernstein, (for Richard L. Fogel, Director), GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921)

Contact: Human Resources Division

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554 0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301). 21 C.F.R. 110.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO developed information on the status of sanitation conditions in the food manufacturing industry and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) management of its inspection activities. In addition, GAO reviewed the ability of FDA to enforce regulations which ensure that foods are manufactured under sanitary conditions. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that 93 percent of the food manufacturers sampled nationwide have sanitary conditions that would likely prevent products from becoming contaminated. In response to a GAO request, FDA inspected 97 randomly selected food manufacturing plants and 69 percent of the plants had insanitary conditions in both large and small establishments covering a variety of products. FDA took action to deal with 11 of these establishments. GAO found that the FDA food establishment inventory is inaccurate and contains establishments that are out of business or misclassified. Furthermore, over half of the manufacturers included in the sample which GAO reviewed have interstate sales of 10 percent or less and, therefore, are more appropriately subject to routine inspections by state or local governments. Although FDA has been adjusting its food establishment inventory, GAO has found that opportunities exist for FDA to further reduce the inventory. Finally, GAO found that regulations, aimed at ensuring that establishments operate under sanitary conditions, are valid and substantive and are enforceable when a departure from the regulations represent insanitary conditions sufficient to meet the definition of adulterated food as defined in the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. However, the act does not impose any sanctions for departures from the regulations. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to continue to review the current food manufacturing establishment inventory and remove those establishments with little or no interstate shipment of foods unless FDA finds a compelling need for continued inspection of such establishments. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to consider the sufficiency of the current level and allocation of inspection resources devoted to the food sanitation and quality control programs and make appropriate adjustments recognizing the reduced inventory and extent of inspection coverage needed to adequately monitor food manufacturing establishments.

125103

Better Wage-Matching Systems and Procedures Would Enhance Food Stamp Program Integrity. RCED-84-112, B-206711. September 11, 1984. 37 pp. plus 6 appendices (11 pp.).

Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Income Security and Social Services: Efficient Administration and Quality of Service of Needs-Based Cash Assistance

Programs (1332); Food: Improvements in the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program (1744).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Income Security Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604 0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on the Budget, House Committee on Appropriations Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee, Senate Committee on Budget, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.*

Authority: Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-249) Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Social Security Act Food Stamp and Community Distribution Amendments of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-369). Social Security Amendments of 1977 (P.L. 95-216). P.L. 98-204 H Rept. 96-788

Abstract: GAO reviewed states' wage-matching activities in the Food Stamp Program to determine whether the Department of Agriculture's and states' wage-matching efforts have effectively addressed the benefit overissuance problem. GAO also analyzed the effectiveness of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program matching operations on a smaller scale. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that underreporting of beneficiary earnings is the most significant cause of food stamp overissuances, which currently are about \$1 billion annually. Although congressional requirements to match wages with external sources can be an effective method for improving the program's integrity, GAO found that wage matching could be made more effective and efficient through the use of automated procedures, broader program coverage, and effective tolerances in pursuing wage differences. Active federal involvement in guiding and assisting states to improve their matching systems would benefit not only the Food Stamp Program, but also the AFDC Program. Thorough follow-up actions should ensure that appropriate measures are taken to identify and recover overissuances. GAO noted, however, that follow-up action in most of the cases it reviewed was either not taken, was incomplete, or was inappropriate and the potential benefits from wage matching were not fully achieved. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service to issue policy guidance to improve the efficiency of states' wage-matching systems for identifying and referring for followup specific cases involving potential overpayments. This initiative should: (1) describe the most efficient automated methods for identifying participants who have not reported their total income; (2) require states to obtain and compare earned income information of households for which external wage data is obtained; and (3) establish dollar criteria on the amounts of potential income errors which require local office followup. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service to modify Service regulations concerning increased federal participation in states' cost to develop, install new, or upgrade existing computer systems to require that states' systems retain historical data on participant-reported earnings. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service to work with states which already have computer capability to establish and implement systems to conduct automated comparisons of external and participant-reported wage information for the same calendar period. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service to modify Service regulations and establish policy guidance to set forth specific Service expectations regarding state followup actions. The regulations also should require that states and local offices provide

appropriate instructions and training to staff performing followup activities and that states establish controls for monitoring accuracy, timeliness, and completion of local office followup work. The Service should evaluate the adequacy of state followup efforts as part of its state level operations reviews and its validations of states' management evaluation reviews

125129

FDA's Oversight of the 1982 Canned Salmon Recalls. IIRD-84-77, B-210249. September 12, 1984. Released September 24, 1984. 30 pp

Report to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Food and Drug Administration

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; Rep. John D. Dingell.*

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the conduct of a recall of canned Alaskan salmon that occurred in 1982, focusing on: (1) the role of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the recall; (2) the basis for the recall; (3) the adequacy of processes followed in the recall; (4) the adequacy of assurance received by FDA that recalled salmon was removed from the market and reconditioned or destroyed; (5) corrective measures taken by Alaskan canneries to prevent problems similar to the one that triggered the recall; and (6) the impact of the recall on the salmon industry. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the FDA investigation that ended in the recall was triggered when a Belgian man died after eating canned Alaskan salmon that was contaminated by botulinum toxin. The salmon became contaminated because defective canning equipment made a hole in the can in which it was packaged. FDA found that the equipment used by 31 Alaskan canneries could produce similar defects and agreed with the cannery industry to check a sample of each cannery's production. The agreement further provided that any cannery that was found to have produced defective cans would recall its entire 1980 and 1981 production of salmon. Nine canneries eventually agreed to recall their 1980 and 1981 production of salmon. GAO also found that: (1) two canneries that did not participate in the recall should possibly have done so; and (2) in two instances, recalled salmon was returned to the market without being reprocessed or repacked. In addition, GAO found that: (1) the salmon recalls resulted in a decline of salmon prices and the loss to the salmon industry of about 6 months worth of sales; (2) canneries that participated in the recall incurred costs of about \$10 to \$15 per case of recalled salmon; (3) FDA spent \$9 million and used about 220 staff years in the recall effort; and (4) virtually the entire salmon industry has taken action to upgrade quality controls.

125146

National Academy of Sciences' Reports on Diet and Health--Are They Credible and Consistent? RCED-84-109; B-210589. August 21, 1984. Released September 18, 1984. 50 pp. plus 8 appendices (38 pp.).

Report to Sen. Charles E. Grassley; Sen. J. James Exon; Sen. Roger W. Jepsen; Sen. John Melcher; Rep. Cooper Evans; Rep.

William F. Goodling; Rep. Charles W. Stenholm, Rep. Arlan Stangeland; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Issue Area: Food: Best Management and Planning Tools Applicable to the Food and Agriculture System and Their Uses (1736); Science and Technology: Improvement by Federal Policies of the Climate for Innovation That Will Foster Economic Growth and Improve the Quality of Life (2021); Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921)

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Health Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2)

Organization Concerned: National Academy of Sciences.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Thomas J. Tauke, Rep. Charles W. Stenholm; Rep. Arlan Stangeland; Rep. William F. Goodling; Rep. Cooper Evans, Sen. John Melcher; Sen. Roger W. Jepsen; Sen. Charles E. Grassley; Sen. J. James Exon

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined issues relating to two reports issued by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), entitled "Toward Healthful Diets" and "Diet, Nutrition, and Cancer." Because the reports differed about whether the risk of chronic disease can be reduced through dietary modification, GAO was asked to: (1) study NAS processes of providing reports on controversial subjects; and (2) determine the range of issues pertaining to the relationship of diet to cancer. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO noted that "Toward Healthful Diets" was criticized because it minimized the benefit of dietary modification in reducing the risk of chronic disease, and that "Diets, Nutrition, and Cancer" was criticized because it suggested, allegedly without sufficient evidence, that dietary modifications can reduce the risk of cancer. GAO found that NAS has standard processes for: (1) reviewing study proposals; (2) appointing scientists to study groups; (3) reviewing proposed reports; and (4) ensuring that proposed reports are scientifically credible. GAO believes that NAS followed its standard processes in issuing the two reports. GAO also found that: (1) while the two reports differed as to whether dietary changes can reduce the risk of chronic disease, both offered dietary advice consistent with that offered by other groups, and (2) the reports differed because they were written for different purposes and audiences by different groups within NAS. In addition, GAO found that the reports were representative of two different schools of thought with respect to what scientific evidence is sufficient for providing dietary advice to the public. According to scientists and NAS officials, this legitimate difference of opinion stems from the fact that nutrition science is not thoroughly developed. GAO believes that, to aid public understanding of its reports, NAS may want to consider: (1) ensuring that study groups clearly set forth the basis for their conclusions and recommendations; and (2) delineating in future reports the extent of scientific disagreement over subjects reported upon.

125201

Establishing New Federal Food-Buying Procedures Would Help Eliminate Unnecessary Special Examinations. RCED-84-150; B-216056. September 24, 1984. 34 pp. plus 5 appendices (7 pp.). Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary, Department of Defense; Harry N. Walters, Administrator of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Administration; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food: Effectiveness and Efficiency of Food Quality Assurance Programs in Ensuring the Provision of Safe, Nutritious Food to the Consumer (1741); General Procurement: Improving Contract Administration (1933).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Agriculture. Agricultural Research and Services (352.0), National Defense: Department of Defense - Procurement and Contracts (051.2); International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense, Department of Agriculture; Veterans Administration

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee, House Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Defense Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (15 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.). Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.). Egg Products Inspection Law (21 U.S.C. 1031 et seq.)

Abstract: GAO reviewed federal practices for accepting food purchases to determine if federal costs could be decreased by reducing the number of special examinations necessary to ensure the quality of accepted products. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that the direct cost of certification services was \$18 million in fiscal year 1982. Although the Department of Agriculture has instructed other federal agencies to waive certification when it is not cost effective, some agencies routinely require certification because federal buying agencies do not have procedures for weighing the costs and benefits of certification. Some agencies believe that certification is necessary because suppliers who have previously supplied defective products cannot be excluded from competition for food procurements, but GAO noted that agencies may consider past performance in determining suppliers' responsibility. GAO also found that: (1) many certifications duplicate industry quality control efforts or required federal inspections; and (2) certification can be extremely costly because the costs of increased production time brought on by unnecessary certification are passed on to the government by suppliers. GAO noted that the costs of certification of one purchase of ground beef amounted to 9.3 percent of the total value of the purchase. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretaries of Agriculture and Defense and the Administrator of Veterans Affairs should direct their respective food-buying agencies to establish procedures which would require that the costs and benefits of certification be weighed before deciding to require that specific food purchases be certified. To determine the cost of certification which may be required for a specific food purchase, the buying agency should request suppliers to identify the food price with and without the cost of certification and inform prospective suppliers that certification costs may be waived for qualifying suppliers. To assist buyers in weighing the benefits of certification, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Defense and the Administrator of Veterans Affairs should direct their buying agencies to establish procedures for obtaining available information on suppliers' qualifications and past records of performance from the Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Inspection Service. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Agricultural Marketing Service to recognize existing safety and quality control systems and to review and revise its certification procedures for meat and poultry products to: (1) eliminate certification procedures that duplicate existing safety inspection procedures; (2) reduce certification effort where the Food Safety and Inspection Service has found that the suppliers' quality control systems provide adequate assurance of product quality; and (3) reconsider the recommendations included in the report on the task force review of meat grading and certification control methods and procedures.

125297

[*The Homeless*]. October 3, 1984 16 pp

Testimony before the House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee, by Joseph F. Delfico, Associate Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. P.L. 98-8.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO testified on trends in the incidence of homelessness, factors which may be contributing to these trends, and programs and policies affecting the homeless. GAO found that, while there is disagreement on the exact number of homeless persons, there is a consensus among experts and government officials that homelessness has increased in the past several years. Further, while this group has many persons with serious alcohol and drug abuse problems and mental health disorders, its composition has changed so that today's homeless include more young people, minorities, women, and children. Multiple and interrelated factors appear to be contributing to the trend in increased homelessness, including the high unemployment rate from 1979 to 1983, the decline in the supply of low-income housing, the deinstitutionalization of mentally ill persons, increases in personal crises, and cuts in public assistance programs. There is also agreement that facilities and services are not sufficient to meet the needs of the homeless for shelter. Even if the most conservative estimate of the size of the homeless population is used, between 140,000 and 240,000 homeless persons do not have access to shelter on a given night. While there are federal resources for which the homeless should be eligible, there is no nationwide coordinated outreach effort to bring federal, state, local, and private resources to bear on the homeless problem.

125315

Legislative Changes and Administrative Improvements Should Be Considered for FDA To Better Protect the Public From Adulterated Food Products. HRD-84-61; B-210249. September 26, 1984. Released October 9, 1984. 32 pp. plus 5 appendices (13 pp.).

Report to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Consumer and Worker Protection: Consumers Protection From Contaminants and Poisons in Food (0921).

Contact: Human Resources Division

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Rep. John D. Dingell.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301). Medical Device Amendments of 1976. Freedom of Information Act. 7 U.S.C. 136(1). 15 U.S.C. 2068(a)(5).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO evaluated the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) efforts to remove adulterated food products from the market and attempted to determine whether FDA needs additional authority to carry out its mission. GAO reviewed food recalls, food seizures, and prosecution actions carried out by FDA from 1980 to 1982. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, while FDA is authorized to seize adulterated foods, it is not authorized to detain such products while seizure actions are being processed by FDA and the Justice Department. FDA frequently requests states to detain adulterated foods or requests firms to voluntarily hold food products. However, GAO found several instances where products were unavailable for seizure by the time seizure actions were processed. GAO believes that: (1) if FDA had detention authority over adulterated foods, similar to its authority over medical devices, it could prevent greater amounts of adulterated foods from reaching the market; and (2) FDA could more easily remove adulterated foods from the market if it had the authority to review food manufacturers' production and distribution records. GAO also found that: (1) FDA could hasten the seizure process by eliminating several levels of review within FDA; (2) FDA has not adequately monitored recalled foods to ensure that recalled products are reconditioned; and (3) fines assessed for violations of federal laws pertaining to adulterated foods are relatively small. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should consider whether FDA needs specific authority to detain adulterated foods while the agency processes seizure requests internally and through the Department of Justice. Congress should consider amending the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to give FDA authority to review production and shipping records after it has found that a firm is producing adulterated food products. Congress should consider amending section 303(a) of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to increase the amount of the fine authorized for criminal prosecutions. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to initiate steps to improve the timeliness of seizure actions by identifying more routine seizure cases involving filth and economic adulteration that could be referred by district directors to U.S. attorneys after concurrence by the FDA Office of the General Counsel. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner of FDA to develop guidelines specifying required verification procedures to ensure that the destruction and reconditioning of recalled foods is adequately verified directly by FDA or through some alternative means, such as appropriate state or local officials.

125391

HHS' Implementation of Superfund Health-Related Responsibilities. HRD-84-62; B-207182. September 28, 1984. Released October 16, 1984. 28 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.).

Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Health Programs: Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federally Supported Prevention and Treatment Efforts in Controlling Disease, Illness, and Substance Abuse (1230); Environmental Protection Programs: Effectiveness of Federal and State Programs in Reducing the Environmental and Health Dangers Posed by Hazardous and Solid Wastes (2221).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2); Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee

on Energy and Commerce Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; Congress; Rep. James J. Florio.

Authority: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-510) Urgent Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1982. Executive Order 12316.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO determined the extent to which the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been carrying out its responsibilities under the Superfund program. HHS responsibilities under Superfund include: (1) information collection, analysis, and management; (2) provision of medical services including care, testing, and research; and (3) development of standards to protect hazardous waste workers. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that HHS: (1) is developing plans to establish three required registries of hazardous substance-related diseases, but has not developed a registry of persons exposed to toxic substances; (2) is planning to upgrade its inventory of information on the health effects of hazardous substances, but has not because of funding decreases; (3) has contracted for the development of a complete registry of areas closed due to contamination by toxic substances; (4) has conducted some biological testing at emergency sites; (5) has several studies in progress regarding the health effects of hazardous substances, but had only completed one such study since Superfund's implementation; and (6) has experienced delays in the establishment of safety standards for hazardous waste workers. In addition, GAO found that HHS has made limited progress with Superfund implementation because of (1) funding delays and reductions by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which coordinates the Superfund budget; and (2) staffing limitations within HHS. **Recommendation To Congress:** As Congress deliberates the future of Superfund, particularly the health-related responsibilities of HHS, it may wish to consider the workability of the existing arrangement whereby EPA controls HHS funding levels and whether additional staff positions should be authorized for HHS activities to avert past situations where HHS had inadequate funds or staff to carry out its plans. If Congress considers the HHS interpretations of its role under the act to be inconsistent with congressional intent, it may wish to: (1) clarify the purpose and intent of the national exposure and disease registries and the types of information to be included; (2) clarify the extent to which medical care is to be provided; and (3) define such terms as "exposed individuals" and "public health emergencies."

125410

[Information on Indemnity Payments in USDA's Avian Influenza Eradication Program]. RCED-85-36; B-216553. October 11, 1984. 9 pp. plus 1 enclosure (11 pp.).

Report to Rep. Thomas R. Harkin, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture, Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. James R. Olin; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign

Agriculture Subcommittee, Rep. James R. Olin, Rep. Thomas R. Harkin, Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.

Authority: 21 U.S.C. 134a.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the methodology the Department of Agriculture (USDA) used in calculating indemnity rates for destruction of poultry flocks under the avian influenza eradication program. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that USDA originally established per-bird indemnity rates for all types of poultry to compensate producers for production costs incurred at the time their flocks were destroyed. However, USDA increased the per-bird indemnity rates to reflect increases in production costs for all poultry other than egg-producing hens, referred to as layers. Because these layers generate revenue continuously and could not be replaced immediately, USDA decided to change per-bird indemnity rates for layers to fairly compensate producers. GAO concluded that producers of poultry that was raised for slaughter were indemnified at least as well as layer producers even though a different basis was used for setting the per-bird indemnity rates.

125487

[Complaint That School District Failed To Award Firm Service Contract]. B-215692. October 24, 1984. 2 pp.

Decision re: Consolidated Food Management Co.; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Consolidated Food Management Co.; Monroe, WA: School District Number 103; Department of Agriculture.

Authority: School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) 60 Comp. Gen. 414. B-212666 (1984).

Abstract: A firm complained that a school district which received federal funds under a school lunch program failed to award it a food service contract, contending that the solicitation provided that award would be made to the firm offering the lowest management fee but the school district contemplated other factors in awarding the contract. GAO held that: (1) the solicitation clearly specified that a wide range of factors would be considered in contractor selection; and (2) to the extent that the complainant meant to argue that the solicitation should have provided for award to the contractor offering the lowest management fee, the complaint was untimely filed. Accordingly, the complaint was denied in part and dismissed in part.

125547

Financial Management Problems in Developing Countries Reduce the Impact of Assistance. NSIAD-85-19, B-165093. November 5, 1984. 42 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.).

Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, GAO National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Abstract: GAO determined how the Agency for International Development (AID), and other major donor assistance agencies, can better help to identify and meet the financial management training and technical assistance needs of aid recipients. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that AID and the other donors have not adopted policies or developed well-articulated and coordinated programs of assistance to improve host-countries' financial management systems. The donors have not: (1) analyzed the

constraints of financial management as they affect the main sectors of development, or (2) formulated specific policies and programs to address major problem areas. Further, the lack of personnel trained in basic accounting and related financial management functions has adversely affected development program performance in many of these countries. *Recommendation To Agencies:* The Administrator of AID should begin a program for financial management assistance that establishes training priorities and mechanisms on a country-by-country basis and in a regional context, if appropriate. The Administrator of AID, through the U.S. delegation to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development and its participation in Cooperation for Development in Africa, should initiate donor discussions of the constraints of financial management weaknesses and their effect on the main sectors of development assistance programming. Such discussions should also encourage the World Bank's involvement in working with bilateral donors to: (1) discuss the extent to which donors can systematically emphasize improving host-country financial management capability when designing development assistance projects, (2) identify countries requiring major levels of donor training and technical assistance and formulate donor strategies accordingly; and (3) identify the elements of ongoing donor financial management assistance programs which offer potential for long-term replication.

125608

U.S. Sweetener/Sugar Issues and Concerns. RCED-85-19; B-118622. November 15, 1984. 33 pp. plus 6 appendices (11 pp.). Report to Congress, by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Enhancing the Effectiveness of CCC Assistance to Commodities Other Than Wheat and Feed Grains (6504).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Jones-Costigan Act (Sugar Control). Sugar Act of 1937. Sugar Act of 1948. Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (P.L. 98-67). Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 624). Trade Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-618). International Sugar Agreement, October 7, 1977, Multilateral, T.I.A.S. No. 9664. 19 U.S.C. 1202.

Abstract: GAO provided information on issues affecting the sugar industry. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) domestic consumption of sugar declined from 103 pounds per capita in 1972 to 71 pounds per capita in 1983; (2) consumption of sugar as a percentage of domestic sweetener consumption fell from 79 percent to 53 percent during the same period; and (3) while domestic sugarcane production has remained relatively stable since 1975, domestic sugarbeet production and production capacity have declined. GAO also found that: (1) the U.S. role as a sugar importer has important economic effects on sugar-producing countries; (2) a recent initiative to provide assistance to the Caribbean region will benefit Caribbean sugar producers by giving duty-free status to sugar imported from that region; and (3) the International Sugar Agreement, which was intended to promote stability in world sugar prices, has not been effective, primarily because the countries of the European Economic Community are not parties to the agreement. In addition, GAO found that: (1) representatives of sugar-producing and sugar-consuming industries have different views on the optimum structure for a sugar price-support program; (2) without a

price-support program, the United States would become more dependent on imported sugar; (3) retaining a price-support program would involve costs to domestic consumers as a subsidy to sugar producers; (4) the sugar price-support program indirectly benefits other parts of the sweetener industry by encouraging the use of sugar substitutes; and (5) international considerations must be taken into account in determining the eventual direction of U.S. sugar policy.

125653

Department of Agriculture's Acquisition and Distribution of Commodities for Its 1983 Payment-in-Kind Program. RCED-84-137; B-213707. September 25, 1984. Released November 27, 1984. 10 pp. plus 4 appendices (40 pp.).

Report to Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations' Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee, by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food: Best Management and Planning Tools Applicable to the Food and Agriculture System and Their Uses (1736).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. Glenn L. English.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) payment-in-kind (PIK) program, which compensates farmers who withhold production of any of five types of commodities with certain amounts of the crops they would otherwise have harvested. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that in 1983, producers idled about 48 million of the 212 million acres USDA had expected to be planted in the five PIK commodities. USDA did not have enough of four of the commodities and purchased additional quantities from producers with outstanding Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loans. Such producers forfeited a portion of the crops they had used for loan collateral in return for forgiveness of their loans and the right to retain a percentage of the collateral. USDA used competitive bidding to select bids from the producers who retained the lowest percentage of their collateral. GAO also found that, in most cases, USDA met its PIK obligations by providing acceptable commodities in a timely manner. However, USDA could have spent less money to acquire PIK commodities from CCC debtors by using a unit cost approach to bidding. GAO estimated that USDA could have saved between \$58 million and \$256 million using a unit cost approach because USDA did not consider the varying rates at which CCC loaned money to producers. In addition, GAO found that USDA positioned about 1 percent of the total commodities exchanged in localities where they were not needed for the program. **Recommendation To Agencies:** Because comparing bids on a unit cost basis will allow USDA to acquire commodities at the lowest cost, the Secretary of Agriculture should use the unit cost approach in future acquisitions of commodities held as loan collateral.

125709

[Interagency Orders for Training]. B-214810. November 29, 1984. 6 pp.

Decision re: Department of Agriculture Graduate School; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Graduate School; Department of Agriculture.

Authority: Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535) Government Employees' Training Act (5 U.S.C. 4104). 58 Comp. Gen. 94. 37 Comp. Gen. 16. 57 Comp. Gen. 98. B-199533 (1980) B-148581 (1980).

Abstract: The Secretary of Agriculture requested a decision regarding the propriety of interagency agreements under which the Graduate School of the Department of Agriculture, as a nonappropriated fund instrumentality (NAFI), provides training services to federal agencies. The Secretary cited the Economy Act and the Government Employees Training Act as authority for these agreements. The first statute authorizes reimbursable orders for goods or services between agencies or major organizational units within agencies. The second statute authorizes reimbursable agreements between agencies for training services. The Secretary took the position that the Graduate School constitutes a NAFI in that it is associated with governmental entities, and to some extent, is controlled by and operated for the benefit of those government entities. For the purposes of this decision, GAO agreed with the opinion that the Graduate School constitutes a NAFI, although it takes the position that interagency or intra-agency agreements are not appropriate vehicles for transactions between the NAFI and a government agency. In a previous decision, GAO observed that the NAFI is recognized as being a government activity although it differs significantly from other government activities, particularly with respect to budgetary and appropriation requirements. GAO recognized that sole-source procurement through a NAFI may be permissible in certain cases; however, where such procurements are utilized, appropriate sole-source justifications and the use of regular purchase orders are required. Accordingly, it was concluded that neither of these statutes constitutes authority for the agreements in question.

125721

[*GAO Aging Activities in Fiscal Year 1984*]. HRD-85-27; B-217195. November 30, 1984. 1 p. plus 3 enclosures (19 pp.). Report to Sen. John Heinz, Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security: Other Issue Area Work (5091).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Congressional Information Services (990.5).

Organization Concerned: General Accounting Office.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Special Committee on Aging; Sen. John Heinz.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reported on its fiscal year (FY) 1984 activities regarding older Americans. **Findings/Conclusions:** As of September 30, 1984, GAO had issued 41 reports, 22 of which contained summary information, and was involved in 72 assignments concerning the elderly. At the end of FY 1984, 40.5 percent of the GAO workforce was age 40 or over. GAO employment policies prohibit age discrimination, and GAO continues to provide individual retirement counseling and preretirement seminars. The seminars and counseling are intended to assist employees in: (1) calculating retirement income available through the civil service and social security systems and in understanding options involving age, grade, and years of service; (2) understanding health insurance and survivor benefit plans; (3) acquiring information helpful in planning a realistic budget based on income, tax obligations, and benefits and in making legal decisions; (4) gaining insight and perspective on

adjusting to retirement; (5) increasing awareness of the community resources which might support preretirement planning, second careers, and financial planning, and (6) increasing awareness of lifestyle options during the transition from work to retirement.

125752

[*Protest of Cancellation of Justice IFB*]. B-216309 December 4, 1984. 3 pp.

Decision re: Military Base Management, by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Military Base Management, Bureau of Prisons.

Authority: B-205661.2 (1982) B-209148.2 (1983) B-211049 (1983). B-211859 (1983)

Abstract: A firm protested the Bureau of Prisons' cancellation of a solicitation for food services after bid opening, allegedly due to excessive bids and insufficient funds. The protester contended that the cancellation was improper because its bid was reasonable and the procurement was conducted in bad faith. While the protester was the low bidder, the Bureau found that it had allotted less funds for the contract than those bid, and additional funding was unavailable. The protester maintained that the Bureau acted in bad faith because: (1) the agency had only solicited bids to meet its regulatory requirements while intending to provide the program in-house; (2) the agency misled bidders by not specifying the amount of funding available; (3) additional funding was available; (4) the agency failed to provide an analysis of its estimate; and (5) the agency added an extra cost in the evaluation. Cancellation of a solicitation after bids have been opened is not permitted unless a cogent and compelling reason for cancellation exists. GAO has held that an agency's determination that funds are not available is a sufficient reason upon which to cancel a solicitation. Therefore, GAO did not consider the protester's argument that its price was reasonable. Finally, contentions that the agency acted in bad faith were academic since the Bureau could not award the contract due to insufficient funds. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

125778

Additional Actions Taken To Control Marijuana Cultivation and Other Crimes on Federal Lands. RCED-85-18, B-203050. November 28, 1984. Released December 6, 1984. 55 pp. plus 7 appendices (12 pp.).

Report to Rep. John F. Seiberling, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, GAO Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Refer to CED-82-48, March 10, 1982, Accession Number 117764.

Issue Area: Natural Resources Management: Effectiveness of Natural Resources Protection Programs and Their Effect on the Balance Between Land Development and Conservation Interests (6905); Administration of Justice: Other Issue Area Work (4791). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Recreational Resources (303.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Bureau of Land Management; National Park Service; Department of Agriculture; Forest Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; Rep. John F. Seiberling.

Authority: Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 873(a)(5)). 16 U.S.C. 551. Land Policy and Management Act 16 U.S.C. 1a et seq. Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Act (21 U.S.C. 1111). P.L. 87-465.

Abstract: In 1982, GAO reported that illegal and unauthorized activities, including crimes against persons and property and marihuana cultivation, were limiting the ability of the public to use and enjoy natural resources and recreational facilities on federal lands. Pursuant to a congressional request concerning the danger imposed by marihuana growers, GAO updated its previous work focusing on the extent of marihuana cultivation, its effects on the management and use of federal lands, and the actions taken to eradicate marihuana. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that federal lands are attractive to the growth of marihuana because much of the land is located in unpopulated areas where the climate is more conducive to its cultivation. This cultivation threatens public and employee safety, hinders land management activities on some federal lands, and causes resource damage. Detecting and destroying marihuana is becoming more difficult because of the techniques being used to hamper detection. Booby traps are set up by the growers to scare intruders or to warn growers of their presence in the areas where the plots are located. These devices include bear traps, ratraps, fishhooks on lines at eye level, and even more dangerous items such as hand grenades and dynamite. Federal employees and other land users have reported incidences of phone calls, rock throwing, and of having shots fired at them. Marihuana growers have also been suspected of causing fires, cutting timber and shrubs to clear the land, shooting and poaching wildlife, and littering. Since 1981, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service have developed marihuana control policies to provide support in cooperating with other federal, state, and local law enforcement areas and have taken further actions to control crimes against persons and property, trespassing, timber thefts, and other illegal and unauthorized activities. The Department of the Interior stated that it has increased efforts to control marihuana cultivation, but that it remains a serious threat to federal employees and the public.

125793

[Review of the U.S. Army's Use of Volunteers in Research Experiments]. HRD-85-17; B-216922. November 6, 1984. Released December 7, 1984. 7 pp.
Report to Rep. Thomas J. Downey; by Philip A. Bernstein, (for Richard L. Fogel, Director), GAO Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Health Delivery and Quality of Care: Effectiveness of DOD and VA Programs in Encouraging, Measuring, Monitoring, and Ensuring Efficient Delivery of Health Services (5204).

Contact: Human Resources Division

Budget Function: Health: Health Research (552.0)

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Thomas J. Downey.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO discussed the Army's practice of using volunteer servicemen in its research experiments to determine whether the volunteers are fully informed of the nature of the experiments. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that volunteers used in these research experiments are selected from civilian and military groups. Proposed experiments are reviewed by committees to ensure that the volunteers are protected and that procedures for obtaining fully informed consent have been initiated. GAO concluded that the explanations given to the volunteers concerning the experiments met the basic elements of informed consent requirements, including identification of any substances the volunteers would receive.

125832

Legislative Developments. 1984. 2 pp.

by Judith Hatter, GAO Office of Library Services.

In *The GAO Review*, Vol. 19, Issue 4, Fall 1984, pp. 42, 48.

Contact: Office of Library Services

Authority: Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Miller Act (Public Building Contracts) (P.L. 98-269). Small Business Act. Domestic Housing and International Recovery and Financial Stability Act (P.L. 98-181, 97 Stat. 1153). International Lending Supervision Act of 1983. Property and Administrative Services Act. H.R. 596 (98th Cong.). H.R. 4973 (98th Cong.). H.R. 5026 (98th Cong.). S. 2236 (98th Cong.). S. 2243 (98th Cong.). S. 2255 (98th Cong.). S. 2300 (98th Cong.). S. 2304 (98th Cong.). S. 2489 (98th Cong.). S. 2508 (98th Cong.).

Abstract: This article discussed new legislation to improve the examination and supervision of bank loans to foreign countries and proposed legislation that would (1) transfer the responsibility for furnishing copies of Miller Act bonds from GAO to agency contracting officers; (2) improve the examination and supervision of bank loans to foreign countries; (3) enhance the U.S. food aid and exporting programs; and (4) affect government cash management practices, cost control, small business competition, payments in lieu of taxes to local governments, multiyear contracting, and taxpayers' rights.

125835

An Analysis of Issues Concerning "Acid Rain". RCED-85-13; B-209020. December 11, 1984. 124 pp. plus 5 appendices (61 pp.). **Report to Congress;** by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Energy. Other Issue Area Work (6491); Environment: Overview of Success and Shortcomings of Federal and State Efforts To Control Toxic Air Pollutants (6805), International Affairs. Non-Line-of-Effort Assignments (0651).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment. Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0); International Affairs. Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0); Energy: Energy Supply (271.0)

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Energy; Council on Environmental Quality; Department of State

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Acid Precipitation Act of 1980. Clean Air Act. Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970. Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977. S. 3041 (97th Cong.). H.R. 3400 (98th Cong.). S. 1706 (97th Cong.). S. 768 (98th Cong.). S. 2594 (97th Cong.). S. 2215 (98th Cong.). S. 2001 (98th Cong.). S. 454 (98th Cong.). S. 766 (98th Cong.). H.R. 1405 (98th Cong.). H.R. 3904 (98th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO examined the issues involved in the decision on controlling acid deposition, or acid rain. GAO also examined: (1) whether available scientific information could indicate clearly the appropriateness of beginning control action, and (2) the current state of knowledge on the subject. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, because the Clean Air Act currently focuses on concentrations of pollutants near their sources, any air pollution control approach to deal with acid rain in this century would necessitate additions to, or a basic reorientation of, the ambient air quality standard approach in the present act. The dispute persists over whether it would be advisable to establish emission controls promptly to reduce acid rain or wait further. GAO believes that having control plans ready could save time, and therefore spare resources, in the event a need for rapid action becomes evident. GAO concluded that, regardless of decisions that are made to control acid rain in the short run, further scientific work will be needed for a number of years.

125967

U.S. Participation in U.N. Program Budgets. NSIAD-85-14; B-216271. December 28, 1984. 27 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.).

Report to Sen. Charles H. Percy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, by Charles A. Bowsheer, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Affairs (0600), International Affairs U.S. Participation in International Organizations (0609)

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division

Budget Function: International Affairs International Financial Programs (155 0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Sen. Charles H. Percy.

Authority: P.L. 98-164

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed U.S. participation in the budget process of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). **Findings/Conclusions:** Since 1981, the United States has had an international organization budget policy which called for zero net program growth and a significant absorption of nondiscretionary cost increases. An active promotion of this policy has contributed to the lower levels of program growth which were achieved in the 1984-85 program budgets of most of the United Nations (U.N.) agencies. GAO found that the organizations' budget documents do not clearly designate intended users, expected results, and other performance indicators. In addition, the documents are not always available to U.S. reviewing officials early enough prior to major U.N. agency meetings. GAO found that the extent to which major executive agencies involved in FAO and UNESCO affairs participated in the management process varied widely, and the action programs were prepared unilaterally by the Department of State. Furthermore, State's involvement in the budget process and the opportunity for access to budget data and information sources is limited by a lack of geographic proximity to U.N. agencies. While the zero growth policy necessitated reductions in existing programs to offset any new program proposals, it did not (1) emphasize how or where such reductions could be made; (2) address ways to absorb associated cost increases in existing activities, (3) emphasize early U.S. participation in the budget process, or (4) identify where specific program reductions could be made in association with U.S. program goals and objectives. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of State should promote the interagency consultation and planning necessary for developing strategies and action plans, determining means for implementation, and designating tasks and responsibilities for earlier U.S. involvement in U.N. agencies. The approach applied to the 1984-85 International Labor Organization budget is one example of how this might be done. Such efforts should begin on a selective agency-by-agency basis and should weigh the relative needs for this additional emphasis in particular U.N. agencies and the availability of staffing and funding resources to carry out the new initiatives.

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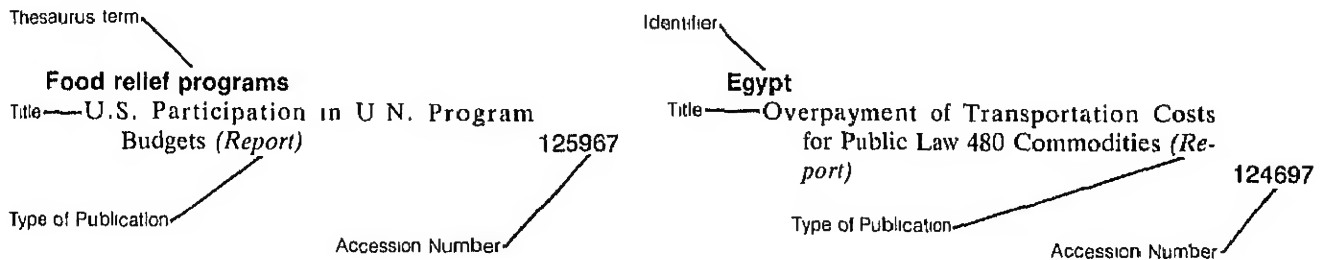
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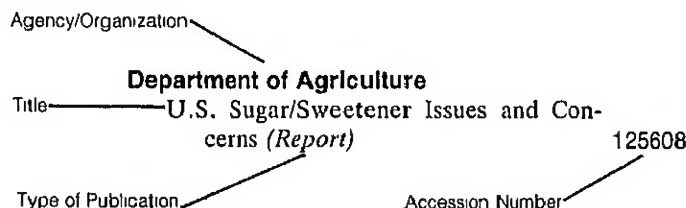
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